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TRUANCY AND NON-ATTENDANCE IN THE CHICAGO SCHOOLS

A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOR LEGISLATION OF ILLINOIS

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TO

JANE ADDAMS

GUIDE AND FRIEND

PREFACE

This study of the truant and non-attending school children of Chicago was begun as a continuation of an inquiry into the care of the wards of the Juvenile Court of Cook County, which we undertook some years ago in the Department of Social Investigation of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. A study of the delinquent children of the court was published four years ago[1] and it was planned to follow that volume with similar studies of the truant and the dependent children who also come before the Chicago Court.

The present volume, however, has taken us beyond the juvenile court children with whom we began. A study of truant children, which was planned as the second volume in a juvenile court series, led us into the larger problem of school attendance, for it was apparent that a study of truancy would be of little value without an inquiry into the broader questions of non-attendance during the compulsory-attendance period and the enforcement of the child labor laws which should protect the children who are near the age when the required period of school attendance comes to an end.

Thirty-three years have passed since the principle of compulsory school attendance was adopted in the state of Illinois by the passing of the first "Act to secure to children the benefit of an elementary education." The following chapters show how slow we were to adopt this principle and how reluctantly, after it was adopted, the local educational authorities of the various cities, towns, and counties to whom its enforcement was

[1] See *The Delinquent Child and the Home: A Study of the Delinquent Wards of the Juvenile Court of Chicago*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1912.

intrusted, proceeded to act under it. Experience has taught us that almost any form of social legislation that is left to be enforced by a multitude of independent local authorities will be brought slowly to its promised usefulness. Unfortunately it was not possible for us to extend our study far beyond the limits of Chicago. Chaps. xvii and xviii, however, throw some light on the present compulsory-attendance situation throughout the state and raise once again the question whether a state educational authority—commission or bureau—should not be created with the power of supervising the work of the local authorities in the enforcement of the state school laws.

Some criticism may fall to our lot because we have ventured to write of educational matters connected with the Chicago public-school system when we have never had any connection with the Chicago schools. Our excuse must be that such a book obviously could not be written by those inside the school system. A further excuse which should perhaps be offered is that for nearly a decade we have been closely connected with the social agencies of Chicago and that this study deals only with the social aspects of school problems. It is our belief that there should be a closer co-operation between the schools and those who call themselves "social workers" in all our large cities; for, after all, the teachers in our elementary schools should form the largest body of social workers in every depressed and congested district where there is a field for social work.

In the course of collecting material for this inquiry we have incurred many obligations which we can acknowledge only collectively. To the members of the Chicago school system, the Department of Compulsory Education, the Chicago Parental School, and the Chicago Juvenile Court we are greatly indebted for information cheerfully given in response to many tedious inquiries. It is a pleasure to express here our deep appreciation of the generous co-operation which was given by Judge Merritt W. Pinckney, of the Chicago Juvenile Court, and by

Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, who for five years, never to be forgotten by those interested in educational progress, was superintendent of the Chicago public schools. Although they had no part in suggesting, planning, or directing this inquiry, they both welcomed any attempt, honestly made, to obtain information regarding the working of the great institutions which are maintained for the poorest and most friendless of the children of Chicago.

We must also express our appreciation to our friend and former colleague at Hull-House and the School of Civics and Philanthropy, Miss Julia C. Lathrop, now chief of the Federal Children's Bureau. Miss Lathrop read the entire manuscript, and we are indebted to her for valuable suggestions. It is scarcely necessary to say, however, that no one of the persons mentioned has the smallest responsibility for any of the opinions expressed in these pages.

To our friends in the social agencies of Chicago, especially the Immigrants' Protective League, the Vocational Supervision Bureau, the Juvenile Protective Association, and the United Charities, we are deeply indebted. Through their experience, working as they do day after day and year after year with the families of the children that the compulsory education and child labor laws were designed to protect, they have an invaluable store of information regarding the administration of these laws, and this experience they have generously shared with us.

It is a pleasure to explain that this study, like the earlier juvenile court investigation, has been carried on with the assistance of students in the Department of Social Investigation of the School of Civics and Philanthropy. It is unfortunately not possible to mention by name all the students who have had some share in the work. Special acknowledgment must, however, be made of the work of Miss Grace P. Norton (now Mrs. Lorenz), Miss Natalie Walker, Miss Margaret Hobbs,

Miss Helen Campbell, and Miss Fanny R. Sweeny (now Mrs. Wickes). We are also indebted to Miss Maud E. Lavery, of the School of Civics and Philanthropy, for assistance of many kinds. Finally, we must record our appreciation of the help given by the Russell Sage Foundation, which generously supplied the funds necessary for the carrying out of this inquiry.

Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy
November 23, 1916

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PART I

LEGAL PRINCIPLES: HISTORY OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION LEGISLATION IN ILLINOIS

CHAPTER I

LEGAL ASPECTS OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Many questions of interest suggest themselves in connection with the attempt of the community to provide educational opportunities for all the children and to insure to all the children the enjoyment of those opportunities. First, perhaps, should be considered the question of the agency by which such provision should be made. Should this be done by the federal government or by the forty-eight different state governments?

The problem of the education of the people in the elementary branches is essentially a national problem which should be looked at from a national point of view. As a result of the ease of migration in America and of the mobility of labor required under our present industrial conditions, the probability of a person's spending his later life in the place in which he spends his childhood is very slight. Nor is there any possible way of forecasting his movements. A minimum standard of education becomes, then, a matter of concern to the entire country, any portion of which may suffer from the burden of inadequate training and consequent industrial and civic inefficiency. This general concern has been registered in the grants by the federal government of public land for educational purposes, and all questions relating to education should, in fact, also be regarded from a national point of view. This is, however, impossible under our constitutional limitations, and our federal government[1] confines its activities in the field of education, except in the matter of land grants, to the collection

[1] Except, of course, in those jurisdictions over which the federal government exercises direct governmental control, as in the District of Columbia.

and the publication of educational material[1] and to grants in aid of special forms of education, as for example, mechanical, agricultural, or vocational training. Under our American system, therefore, the control over education is left to the jurisdiction of forty-eight different state governments. The result of this has been, of course, lack of uniformity with regard to every question of educational policy, irregular and halting progress, and standards established by the educational authorities which vary from state to state.[2] So universal, however, is the interest in this subject, so widespread the belief in its importance, that the expenditures for the support of the state educational systems amount to very large sums. The Commissioner of Education, for example, reports that in a single year[3] the value of the common-school property in the various states amounted to $1,266,382,277, while the expenditure reached the sum of $482,886,793, the number of teachers employed 547,289, and the enrolment in public elementary schools 17,077,577. The corresponding figures for Illinois show that the value of school property and school funds amounted to $110,860,023 and the expenditure amounted to $34,217,582. The number of teachers was 30,473 and the public-school enrolment 912,811.[4]

Another question relating to the agency which should provide educational facilities for the people, and one which has

[1] See the annual reports of the Commissioner of Education. This is, of course, an incomplete statement, if agricultural and mechanical education under special acts of Congress be recalled. See, for example, the so-called Smith-Lever bill (*Annual Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education*, 1914, I, 296). It is, however, substantially true with reference to the provision of general educational opportunity.

[2] Note the varying expressions with regard to private schools cited below, p. 4.

[3] See *Annual Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education*, 1913, II, 17 ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 20. There was an estimated enrolment of 193,734 in private schools that year.

been the subject of bitter controversy in other countries, is that of the relative claims of the church and the state to make such provision. In the United States, the issue has not in general been drawn between the claims of the church on the one hand and of private initiative of a non-ecclesiastical character on the other; or between the church with its spiritual sanction and the state with its organization of compulsion, as it was drawn in England during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, when the church retained the right to control the form of educational organization and the state only gradually and almost surreptitiously assumed the power first to standardize and then directly to organize the school system.[1] It is interesting to recall the fact that, in England, efforts to develop a system of public education were opposed by those jealous of the prerogatives of the church on the one hand and by those who feared that the results of bureaucratic organization would be to replace by monotony, uniformity, and mediocrity the variety, initiative, and freedom which should characterize liberal education. John Stuart Mill, for example, wrote that a "general state education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another."[2]

Although the issue has never been drawn in this way in the United States and although the organization of a public system of education has from the earliest settlement of the country been regarded as a proper exercise of governmental power, the government has never attempted to monopolize that function

[1] A review of the development of the free compulsory school systems in other countries is beyond the scope of this study. For a general survey of these systems, see DeMontmorency, *State Intervention in English Education;* Balfour, *Educational Systems of Great Britain and Ireland;* Craik, *The State in Relation to Education;* Munro, *Cyclopaedia of Education;* Parker, *History of Modern Elementary Education;* Halsbury, *The Laws of England*, Vol. XII.

[2] *Essay on Liberty.* Mill discusses the possibilities of the state's requiring but not providing education.

or seriously to interfere with the freedom of private education[1] beyond setting in general terms a minimum of instruction to be offered and in some states requiring that instruction to be in English.

This minimum will be found in the provisions for compulsory attendance and is expressed in several ways. Schools "taught by competent instructors" are accepted by some states for attendance in place of the public schools.[2] Instruction in "branches usually taught in the public primary schools" fulfils the requirement in others.[3] Instruction in "approved private schools" is the phraseology used in the laws of other states.[4] In some states, as for example, Massachusetts, the statutes prescribe the conditions on which approval may be given, namely when all instruction in subjects prescribed by law is in the English language and equals in thoroughness and efficiency, and in the progress made therein the instruction in the public schools in the same place.[5]

It is obvious that from the administrative machinery provided for the enforcement of compulsory attendance laws, devices for standardizing the private, and, in particular, the sectarian parochial schools might be developed. This has,

[1] Freund, *Police Power*, sec. 266.

[2] For example, by Colorado, Kansas, Montana, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania.

[3] California, Connecticut, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota.

[4] Maine and Massachusetts.

[5] The power of "approval" is given to the school committee, i.e., the local educational authority. In New York, the six "common school branches" are enumerated, viz., reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, English grammar, and geography, and the teaching must be substantially equivalent to that given to children of like age in the public school, with at least as many hours a day and no considerable difference in the number of holidays. The records of attendance must be regularly kept and open to the inspection of school authorities. Rhode Island has a similar provision.

however, been found to be a difficult task, and one element in that difficulty undoubtedly lies in the fact that education is a matter of state rather than federal jurisdiction, and the opposition based on sectarian considerations may disguise itself in innumerable ways according to the issues presenting themselves in the various communities.

While the development of the American system of public education has not been openly resented by the ecclesiastical organization as in England, it has yet had two definite, open sources of opposition to overcome. The first is the claim of the taxpayer not to be compelled to bear the burden of the system unless actually sharing directly in the benefit of the system by receiving instruction. It will appear, for example, that in Illinois, after an unsuccessful attempt had been made in 1825 to enable the majority in any school district to tax themselves for school purposes, it took thirty years, during which time there existed only voluntary provision for those who attended voluntarily, to establish the principle that the "property of all could be taxed to educate the children of all."

The right of all children to an education[1] has now, however, been recognized in Illinois, so that every child may enter school[2] when he has reached the age of six[3] and, except for purposes of necessary discipline[4] or for the purpose of protecting the school against a present menace in the form of contagious disease, may not be excluded from a school session,[5] which cannot legally last less than six months.[6]

[1] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, sec. 114, par. 9.

[2] Regardless of color. See *People* v. *Board of Education of Quincy*, 101 Illinois 308.

[3] *Board of Education* v. *Bolton*, 85 Illinois Appellate 92.

[4] *School Directors* v. *Breen*, 60 Illinois Appellate 201; 167 Illinois 67; *Thompson* v. *Beaver*, 63 Illinois 353; *Rulison* v. *Post*, 79 Illinois 567.

[5] *People* v. *Chicago Board of Education*, 234 Illinois 422.

[6] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, sec. 274.

The second source of opposition was found in the doubt as to the power of the state to interfere with the parental right of the father to determine the amount as well as the kind of education his children should have.[1] One of the most important rights assured the parent under the common law was that of directing the education of his child.[2] The parent was likewise supposed to be under a duty to educate his child, but this was only a moral duty,[3] unenforced by any sanction, and, in the absence of public provision or free religious provision, unenforceable with regard to the poor parent. Moreover, for the poor at earlier periods, education was sometimes related to the child's apprenticeship, and the father, with the right to direct his education, enjoyed likewise the right to place his child at work and to appropriate his earnings. In order to state the situation clearly, the fact may be recalled that the father at common law was entitled to the custody and the control of the child's person with the right to appropriate the child's earnings. The corollary to this right was an alleged duty to maintain, to protect, and to educate.[4] The duty to maintain was so slightly enforced, however, as to give rise to a question as to its very existence;[5] the duty to protect gave rise merely to certain legal defenses, while the duty to educate was declared by Blackstone to be a natural and not a legal duty. So long, therefore, as the community merely provides facilities for public education

[1] On this point see Mill's interesting statement in the *Essay on Liberty*.

[2] Freund, *op. cit.*, sec. 264; Blackstone's *Commentaries*, Book I, chap. xvi, "Parent and Child"; Halsbury, *The Laws of England*, Vol. 17, article on "Infants and Children."

[3] *Hodges* v. *Hodges* (1796), Peake's *Add. Cas.* 79; cited Halsbury, *op. cit.*, Vol. 12, p. 4.

[4] Blackstone's *Commentaries*, Book I, chap. xvi. The mother shares these rights under the so-called co-guardianship laws. See, for example, *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 64, sec. 4.

[5] Breckinridge and Abbott, *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, Appendix, p. 183; Garnett, *Children and the Law*, p. 30.

it is only aiding the parent in the performance of his natural duty. A further step is taken when, in addition to providing facilities of which the parent is willing to take advantage for the sake of his children, new duties are imposed on parents with reference to the care and education of their children. The right of the legislature to impose such new duties has been exercised, for example in Illinois, in the rapidly increasing body of statutes prohibiting cruelty to children,[1] defining dependency and delinquency,[2] giving to the courts power to separate children from their parents when the good of the children demands such separation,[2] punishing parents who contribute to the dependency or delinquency of their children,[3] requiring parents to support their children,[4] prohibiting the employment of young children,[5] and requiring the parents to secure the attendance of their children at school.[6] Questions have been raised as to the power of the legislature to impose upon parents

[1] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 38, sec. 53.

[2] *Ibid.*, chap. 23, sec. 169 fol.

[3] *Ibid.*, chap. 38, sec. 42 *hb*.

[4] *Ibid.*, chap. 64, sec. 24.

[5] *Ibid.*, chap. 48, sec. 20.

[6] Concerning the very modern character of these duties, the following statement by Mr. Sidney Webb in an early issue of the *Crusade* may be noted: "We must take note in passing, that any such notion as enforcing parental responsibility is an entirely new thing. Speaking not pedantically as a lawyer, but broadly as a historian, it is an innovation of the past half-century—almost, we may say, of the present generation. Our ancestors never thought of enforcing parental responsibility. A hundred years ago, if a father left his children half-starved, scantily clothed in rags, with the most miserable lodgings, overcrowded and indecently occupied, with every kind of insanitation, so long as the parish was put to no expense, no one took proceedings against him. Cruelty to animals was made an offense long before cruelty to children. There was no attempt to constrain a parent to keep the child in health, to provide medical attendance for it, to supply education or moral training—least of all any idea of enforcing upon the parent any fulfilment of the obligation to furnish the all-important environment of a decent home. With the not very real exception that doing a child to death too suddenly might (we may almost say theoretically) be treated as murder, there was, a hundred years ago, so far as regards children in their parents' own homes, nothing in the way of enforcement of parental responsibility."

these new duties, but the courts have been unanimous in holding that one of the highest prerogatives of the state is its right gradually to raise the standard of parental care.[1]

So far the question has been raised before the courts in relation to compulsory attendance only in connection with provisions for fining parents who do not send their children to school. The question of the power to separate parent and child on the ground of truancy has not yet been considered by any court. The right has been upheld in the case of delinquent and dependent children; but the right is not so clear when the child is only truant, not delinquent, and when the parents, while failing to secure their children's attendance, do not maintain homes sufficiently below normal to justify finding the children dependent. On this point Professor Freund in his treatise on the *Police Power*[2] says that "the commitment of the child is a measure taken against the child for the child's misconduct

[1] *School Board for London* v. *Jackson*, L.R., 7 Q.B.D. 502 (1881); *State* v. *Bailey*, 157 Ind. 324 (1902): "The natural rights of a parent to the custody and control of his infant child are subordinate to the power of the state, and may be restricted and regulated by municipal laws. One of the most important natural duties of the parent is to educate his child and this duty he owes not to the child only but to the community. If he neglects to perform it or wilfully refuses to do so, he may be coerced by laws to execute such civil obligation. The welfare of the child and the best interests of society require that the state shall exercise its sovereign authority to secure to the child the opportunity to acquire an education. Statutes making it compulsory upon the parent, guardian or the person having the custody and control of children to send them to public or private schools for longer or shorter periods during certain years of the life of such children, have not only been upheld as strictly within the power of the legislature, but have generally been regarded as necessary to carry out the express purposes of the constitution itself" (p. 329). See also *State* v. *Clotter*, 33 Ind. 409 at p. 411; *Burdick* v. *Babcock*, 36 Iowa 562 at p. 566; also *Washington* v. *Counort*, 69 Washington 361; 41 L.R.A. n.s., p. 95; Hochheimer, *Custody of Infants*, sec. 79. See also *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, Appendix, p. 181.

[2] Sec. 265.

(truancy) and that the parent is deprived of custody is an inevitable incident to such a measure, just as a child may be deprived of parental care while a parent is imprisoned." Since, however, there is a doubt on this point and since there is a growing belief in the importance to the state of protecting the child in opposition, if need be, to the wishes of the parents, the decision of a test-case is likely to be more favorable to the child and to the community at a later date than at the present time. In the apparent conflict of interest between the community and the parent with reference to the child's early years, the right of the community is being slowly but surely strengthened. The education authorities have therefore undoubtedly acted wisely in not hastening a decision as to the power to remove the truant child from his parents. In the one Chicago case in which a parent has resisted the action of the court in committing his child and has resorted to the writ of habeas corpus, the educational authorities acquiesced and did not take the case to the Supreme Court.[1]

From this preliminary discussion it becomes clear that the enforcement of attendance at school involves the setting up of administrative machinery through which three services will be rendered: (1) that of supplying to parents and children information with reference to their duty under the law and due notice of failure to perform that duty; (2) that of invoking the aid of the appropriate court in the case of wilful and persistent refusal on the part of the parent to perform his duty; (3) that of enforcing discipline in the case of children whose parents are unable to secure their regular attendance and good behavior at school.

[1] A question which has not been raised, but which Professor Freund suggests, is the power to compel the parent to support the child during commitment to the Parental School. It is submitted that the duty of maintenance formerly unenforceable has now been sanctioned in various ways, and that there is no reason why the duty should cease because of default on the part of the parent or of the child.

This administrative agency in Chicago is the Compulsory Education Department of the Board of Education. The duties of the officers in this department are (1) to report all violations of the compulsory school law, (2) to enter complaints in cases of violation of the law by the parents,[1] (3) to arrest children of school-going age who become habitual truants, and to file petitions for commitment to the Parental School.[2]

As has been said, however, the duty of securing the child's attendance rests primarily upon the parent or the "person having control of the child."[3] This duty is "annually to cause any child between seven and sixteen to attend a public or a private school" during the entire session, which must not be less than six months.

The duty is not always perfectly clear since the present Illinois statute recognizes as entitled to exemption under the law: (1) those children receiving instruction elsewhere in the elementary branches by competent persons, (2) those children whose physical and mental condition renders their attendance impractical or inexpedient, (3) those children who are in the words of the statute "excused for temporary absence for cause" by the principal or the teacher, and (4) those children between fourteen and sixteen years of age who are necessarily and lawfully employed during the hours when the school is in session. Many difficult questions arise in connection with the statutory list of exempt cases. Who is to decide when attendance is

[1] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, secs. 274, 144. It is an interesting fact that the statute provides for a superintendent of compulsory education, while no statutory provision is made for a superintendent of schools. The former is therefore more independent in his relation to the board, which neither creates his office nor defines his duties, than the latter whose position is wholly a result of board action.

[2] *Ibid.*, secs. 145, 146.

[3] *Ibid.*, sec. 275.

"impractical and inexpedient" because of the mental and physical condition of the child? What constitutes "necessity" of employment in the case of the fourteen- or fifteen-year-old child? A clear and universally accepted definition of these terms is essential to an effective enforcement of the law. And, yet, there are at present substantially no general principles governing the interpretation of these clauses.

For a failure, however, to perform the duty of securing the attendance of the child who is not exempt, the Illinois Statute provides that "the parent is liable to prosecution and shall forfeit not less than $5 nor more than $20 (with or without costs) and may be committed until payment is made." For misstatement as to the age of the child, which the parent is under duty to make known correctly, there may also be prosecution and imposition of a forfeit of from $3 to $20, without commitment. Prosecutions for these offenses in those cities in which there is a Municipal Court are held before the appropriate branch of that court,[1] before which are also brought non-supporting parents and those who contribute to the dependency and delinquency of their children.

The machinery which has been developed in Chicago for enforcing the compulsory education law may briefly be described as follows: The officers of the Compulsory Education Department are assigned to schools, at which they call periodically for reports concerning the attendance of children duly enrolled. If they receive from the principals reports of absence or if by such other agencies as the United Charities their attention is called to the fact that certain children are either not enrolled or are irregular in their attendance, notices are sent and visits to the homes are made. In 1913–14, for example, 58,064 such

[1] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 37, sec. 265, par. 3, 5. In Chicago since April 3, 1911, these prosecutions are brought before the Court of Domestic Relations.

absences are reported as having been investigated,[1] resulting in 1,236 warning notices being served on indifferent parents liable to prosecution in the Municipal Court, besides 1,139 notices connected with proposed Juvenile Court action. Of the "indifferent parents," 67 were prosecuted.

In case the real difficulty lies or appears to lie with the child or prosecution of the parents seems an inadequate treatment of the situation, it becomes the duty of the truant officer, or, indeed, of "any reputable citizen" of Chicago to "petition the County or Circuit Court to inquire into the care of the child[2] of school age who has not been attending school or who has been guilty of habitual truancy or of wilful violations of the rules of the school." If the child is under fourteen years of age (and a boy) he may under the statute be sent to the Parental School[3] to be kept until he reaches that age.[4]

In Cook County[5] the court by which these commitments are made is the Juvenile Court, which has jurisdiction likewise

[1] *Sixtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago (1913–14)*, p. 406. No explanation of the exact basis on which reports are made to the department is given in the report of the superintendent, but in general it may be said that when a child has been absent three consecutive days without excuse, his absence is reported to the compulsory attendance officer in his routine visits to the school. The 58,064 cases reported represent then the great mass of absences of children who had already been absent three days or more, besides the cases of children discovered on the street and returned to school or those reported for action by various charitable agencies dealing with families in distress. No information concerning them is given in the report of the superintendent.

[2] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, sec. 144.

[3] The establishment of parental schools is authorized with vote of the people in cities of from 25,000 to 100,000 population. In cities of over that number no such vote need be taken.

[4] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, sec. 145. The Board of Education has authority, but has never exercised it, to make similar provision for girls.

[5] The county in which Chicago is located.

over dependent and delinquent children. In a single year, for example, 826 children are reported by the superintendent of the Department of Compulsory Education as having been brought into the Juvenile Court. Of these, 424 were committed to the Parental School,[1] 386 were either released on probation or continued, generally pending good behavior, 14 were transferred to the dependent docket,[2] and 2 dismissed.

In view of the fact that commitment to the Parental School does not yet rest on a clear decision upholding the law, it is interesting to notice that the early suggestions for a truant police were made rather with the idea of assisting those parents who voluntarily enrolled their children to secure regularity of attendance than to compel indifferent parents to enrol their children. In the same way, the Parental School has been and is used as an aid to the parent, who, desiring to have his child attend but unable to secure that attendance, consents to his commitment, or at least does not resist the action of the court.

The interests of the Chicago children are better safeguarded than are those of children in the outlying parts of the county. Prosecutions in the Court of Domestic Relations are possible only for children within the city limits. The jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court extends, of course, over the whole of Cook County, but the Parental School is maintained by the city and only city children can be committed there. There are in Cook County outside of Chicago 175 school districts, all of which are under a duty to appoint truant officers with power to prosecute parents in courts of appropriate jurisdiction. But no parental school is available for the children who need care and discipline.

The statement of the terms of the statute and the description of the machinery which has been elaborated for its enforce-

[1] *Sixtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1913–14), p. 406.

[2] Under the Juvenile Court act: *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 23, secs. 169 fol.

ment makes it clear that the enjoyment by the children of that minimum of education which the statute has fixed is dependent upon many factors. The efficiency of the Compulsory Education Department is, of course, fundamental; but its effective action depends in part, of course, on the intelligence of the judges before whom they must bring the parents and children for violation of the statute. If, for example, the judge fails to realize the importance of securing to the child the right granted under the statute, the right may be substantially done away with. Such was the result in an English case in which a parent was accused of allowing his little daughter to remain away from school without a reasonable excuse when he let her work in domestic service instead of sending her to school. The by-law required that the parent of every child not less than five nor more than thirteen years of age should cause such child to attend school unless there should be a reasonable excuse. Three reasonable excuses were named in the act, namely, (1) efficient instruction elsewhere, (2) sickness or other unavoidable cause, (3) no public elementary school within three miles. In this case a little twelve-year-old girl who could read and write, the oldest of several children, was kept out of school and allowed by her parents to take employment as a domestic in another family for which she was paid three shillings (75 cents) a week and her meals. The parents were sober and hard working and claimed that they could earn no more than they were already earning and they could not support the other children without the little daughter's aid. They claimed that the need constituted a "reasonable excuse" under the by-law. The judge, the learned Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, said:

> I think the respondent has shown a reasonable excuse within the act for the non-attendance of his child at school. It appears from the statements in the case that the child has been earning money which must have formed a necessary and considerable part of the maintenance of the family. She has been discharging the

honorable duty of helping her parents and, for my own part, before I held that these facts did not afford a reasonable excuse for her non-attendance at school, I should require to see the very plainest words to the contrary in the act. I might add that there is nothing I should read with greater reluctance in any act of parliament than that a child was bound to postpone the direct necessity of her family to the advantage of getting a little more education for herself.[1]

Such a decision would of course give notice to the education authorities that it was futile to attempt to protect the interests of such children and would render nugatory the entire provision enacted for their protection.[2]

Principals and teachers have, of course, a heavy responsibility laid upon them in the power given them to excuse temporary absence for cause, and the machinery will be seen to fail sometimes because of inadequate provision for testing the child's mental powers and for removing mental or physical handicaps which make attendance impractical or inexpedient. Adequacy of provision for the treatment of children whose homes are unfit and whose parents are incompetent and the responsiveness of parents to the community efforts in behalf of their children—these and many other factors enter into the question and determine the manner of its solution.

[1] *London School Board* v. *Duggan*, 13 Q.B.D. 176.

[2] The following statement made by the New York State Education Department with reference to the enforcement of the compulsory school law in that state has significance in this connection. The italics are ours: "From all this, it should not be inferred that substantial advance is not being made from year to year in a better compliance with the requirements of this statute throughout the state. School authorities, teachers, attendance officers, and others are securing compliance with the law pretty well and often in spite of the weakness of the courts. With the steady increase in public sentiment in favor of a proper enforcement of the law, the time is not far distant when *delinquent judges* will find that it *will be not only unpopular* but *dangerous* to fail to protect children in their legal rights under this statute."—*Eighth Annual Report of the Education Department of the State of New York* (1912), p. 333.

In the following chapters an attempt will be made to review the history of the Illinois legislation by which the rights of children and the duties of parents have been formulated. Facts will be presented with reference to the present extent and the apparent causes of truancy and non-attendance in Chicago. It is believed that such an examination is necessary in order to determine the adequacy of the present law and its administration; and it is hoped that such an inquiry may serve as a basis for suggestions of necessary modifications in the machinery for dealing with the truant child or the recalcitrant parent.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION LEGISLATION IN ILLINOIS: THE STRUGGLE FOR A FREE SCHOOL SYSTEM, 1818–55

No history of compulsory education legislation can ignore the long preliminary struggle for the establishment of a free school system; for it was, of course, impossible in America to think of making education compulsory before it became free. The history of the growth of the free compulsory system in Illinois is of more than local interest; for Illinois is the largest state in the middle western group, and the course of development of such legislation in Illinois has been determined by conditions similar to those existing in many other states.

An account of the establishment of a free compulsory educational system in this state may be divided into three periods: (1) the period of the struggle for the "free" principle—from the year 1818, when Illinois was admitted to statehood, to the year 1855, when the principle of taxation for the support of free common schools was accepted in the free school law of that year; (2) the period of struggle for the compulsory principle—from the year 1855 to the year 1883, when the first compulsory law was passed; (3) the period of struggle for the perfection of the compulsory law, a struggle which has been going on ever since the passage of the first compulsory law in 1883 but which entered upon a new phase, which should perhaps be designated as a fourth "period," when preventive legislation, such as child labor and juvenile court laws, began to supplement the compulsory laws that could not become effective without such supplementary statutes.

Theories of the necessity for universal education as the basis of successful democratic government were not easily put into operation in the frontier states. It should not be overlooked that when Illinois became a state these theories had not been reduced to practice anywhere, although the "Commonwealth of Massachusetts" had made a most commendable beginning. In an excellent summary of his chapter on "The Common School in the First Half Century," Professor McMaster says,

> When John Quincy Adams took the oath of office . . . . the common school did not exist as an American institution. In some states it was slowly struggling into existence; in others it was quite unknown. Here, the maintenance was voluntary. There, free education was limited to children of paupers or of parents too poor to educate their sons and daughters at their own expense. Elsewhere, state aid was coupled with local taxation. Scarcely anywhere did the common school system really flourish. Parents were indifferent. Teachers as a class were ill fitted for the work before them, and many a plan which seemed most promising as displayed in the laws accomplished little for the children of the state.[1]

The almost desperate struggle for the bare necessities of life together with the difficulties of organizing an educational system in an undeveloped agricultural state proved to be almost insurmountable in a great state like Illinois with a territory of over fifty-six thousand square miles. The perplexing problems that arose in connection with the organization of the government of the new state, as well as pressing political questions relating to slavery and to internal improvements, absorbed the time and the energy required for the establishment of a state-provided free school system. Moreover, a large proportion of the pioneer settlers of this state had emigrated from Pennsylvania, Louisiana,

[1] *History of the American People*, Vol. V, chap. xlix, "The Common School in the First Half Century," p. 343.

and Kentucky—states in which the principle of universal education through public schools had not yet been established.

In its origin, the Illinois free school system may be said to go back to the ordinance of 1785, which provided that in the Northwest Territory, the great public domain from which Illinois and the other "North-Central" states were created, the sixteenth section (one square mile) of every township should be set aside for the support of public schools in the township.[1] An earlier draft of the ordinance, which also made provision for the support of religion, had provided that "there shall be reserved the central section of every township for the maintenance of public schools; and the section immediately adjoining the same to the northward, for the support of religion. The profits arising therefrom in both instances, to be applied forever according to the will of the majority of the male residents of full age within the same." But Congress refused to assent to the reservation for religion and refused also to pass an amendment making the reservation "for charitable uses,"[2] so that in the end education alone was provided for.

Bancroft, commenting on this legislation in his *History of the Constitution*, says,

> It was a land law for a people going forth to take possession of a seemingly endless domain. Its division was to be into townships, with a perpetual reservation of one mile square in every township for the support of religion, and another part for education. The House refused its assent to the reservation for the support of religion, as connecting the church with the state; but the reservation for the support of schools received a general welcome.[3]

[1] In the final draft of the ordinance, the provision was: "There shall be reserved the lot No. 16 of every township, for the maintenance of public schools within the said township."—*Journal of Congress* (Philadelphia, 1801), Vol. 10, p. 21.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 96–98.

[3] *History of the Constitution of the United States*, p. 134.

Later the ordinance of 1787 contained the well-known declaration that "religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."[1] It is, however, interesting to note that these grants for schools were due not wholly to a noble solicitude for education but in part to a belief that if provision were made for schools people would remove more readily into a new territory and the public lands would therefore be more salable.[2]

The territorial legislature of Illinois passed no laws relating to education, and the subject was not mentioned in the first constitution of the state, that of 1818. But in the same year the act of Congress that had provided for the admission of Illinois as a state contained two provisions regarding education. These provisions of the so-called "enabling act" were as follows:

1. That section numbered sixteen, in every township, and when such section has been sold or otherwise disposed of, other lands equivalent thereto, and as contiguous as may be, shall be granted to the State, for the use of the inhabitants of such township, for the use of the schools.

2. That five per cent of the net proceeds of the lands lying within such State, and which shall be sold by Congress, from and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, after deducting all expenses incident to the same, shall be reserved for the purposes following, viz., two-fifths to be disbursed, under the direction of Congress, in making roads leading to the State; the residue to be appropriated by the Legislature of the State, for the encouragement of learning, of which one-sixth part shall be exclusively bestowed on a college or university.[3]

[1] Ordinance of 1787, Art. III.

[2] See George W. Knight, *Land Grants for Education in the Northwest Territory* (New York and London, 1885), pp. 13–15.

[3] Secs. 1 and 3 in the "Act to Enable the people of Illinois Territory to form a Constitution and State Government" (April 18, 1818) in *General*

Although no attempt will be made to review the history of these famous educational land grants, it should be noted that the school lands were unfortunately not valuable enough to bring in any income during the early years when public lands were still available for new settlers; the short-sighted policy of the wasteful management and sale of these lands which was adopted by Illinois as by other new states in the hope of getting an immediate return, produced funds utterly inadequate even for the poorest sort of schools.[1] It therefore soon became

Public Acts of Congress Respecting the Sale and Disposition of the Public Lands (Washington, D.C., 1838), Vol. I, p. 301.

This second provision was an amendment to the original enabling act, and was due to the efforts of the territorial representative in Congress, Nathaniel Pope. See *Annals of Congress*, 1st Session, Vol. II, p. 1677 (H. of R., April 4, 1818) for the following account: "Mr. Pope then moved further to amend the bill, by striking out that part which appropriated the State's proportion of the proceeds of the sales of the public lands to the construction of roads and canals in said State, and to insert the following: 'For the purposes following, viz., two-fifths to be disbursed, under the direction of Congress, in making roads leading to the State; the residue to be appropriated by the Legislature of the State for the encouragement of learning, of which one . . . . part shall be exclusively bestowed on a college or university.'

"Mr. P. said, that the funds proposed to be applied for the encouragement of learning had, in the other new states, been devoted to roads; but its application had, it was believed, not been productive of the good anticipated; on the contrary, it had been exhausted on local and neighborhood objects, by its distribution among the counties, according to their respective representation in the Legislature. The importance of education in a Republic, he said, was universally acknowledged; and that no active fund would be provided in a new state, the history of the Western States too clearly proved."

[1] It is of interest that Dr. Knight, in the excellent monograph already referred to, maintains that in spite of the fact that the school lands were so wastefully disposed of, yet the grants did much to "promote the cause of education." He maintains that "perhaps the greatest benefit rendered by the funds has been in fostering among the people a desire for good schools. Without the land grants, the burden of maintaining free schools would

apparent that the only method of providing for education was that of taxation, a method stubbornly resisted by the great majority of the new settlers, many of whom were desperately poor.

As early as 1825 the Illinois legislature had passed an act providing for a school system supported by public taxation, but in passing the law the legislature had taken a step that was a generation in advance of public sentiment; and, according to Governor Thomas Ford, the very idea of a tax was "so hateful" that the act was "the subject of much clamorous opposition." "The people," he said, "preferred to pay all that was necessary for the tuition of their children or to keep them in ignorance rather than submit to the mere name of a tax by which their wealthier neighbors bore the brunt of the expense of their education."

This advanced law of 1825, which was entitled, "An Act providing for the establishment of free schools," is so interesting that the preamble and part of the first section are quoted at length:

> To enjoy our rights and liberties [the preamble stated] we must understand them; their security and protection ought to be the first object of a free people; and it is a well-established fact that no nation has ever continued long in the enjoyment of civil and political freedom, which was not virtuous and enlightened; and believing that

have seemed oppressive to the new state, but aided by the income of the funds, the people have grown into a habit of taxing themselves heavily for the support of education. Thus the funds have made possible a system of education which without them it would have been impossible to establish."—Knight, *op. cit.*, pp. 166–67. It should perhaps be noted here that there are seven different educational "funds" in Illinois: (1) the township fund; (2) the seminary fund; (3) the school fund proper; (4) the college fund; (5) the industrial university fund; (6) the surplus revenue fund; (7) the county fund. See John W. Cook, *Educational History of Illinois*, p. 71, and "Sketch of the Permanent Public School Funds of Illinois" in *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1881–82), p. cxx.

the advancement of literature always has been and ever will be the means of developing more fully the rights of man, that the mind of every citizen in a republic, is the common property of society, and constitutes the basis of its strength and happiness; it is therefore considered the peculiar duty of a free government, like ours, to encourage and extend the improvement and cultivation of the intellectual energies of the whole.

And the first section of the statute provided that

> There shall be established a common school or schools in each of the counties of this state, which shall be open and free to every class of white citizens, between the ages of five and twenty-one years of age.

The legislature boldly assumed that if education were essential the people would be willing to tax themselves to provide it, since in no other way could the necessary funds be obtained. But in providing that a majority of the voters in any district might decide on the levy of a general property tax to provide for the support of the common schools of that district, the legislature had attempted to establish a principle which the people of Illinois were not ready to accept in the year 1825. The law was the object of such bitter opposition that it was promptly repealed by the next legislature, and a period of more than a quarter of a century elapsed before the representatives of the people could be persuaded to make any provision for tax-supported schools.

In interesting contrast to our present school law, which requires that all children within specified ages must be sent to school, the early law of 1825 merely provided for an annual report of the number of children living in each school district and "what number of them are actually sent to school." Contrary also to present practice, the law penalized not the parents of children who did *not* go to school but the parents of those who did. Thus the law provided that the work of building or repairing schoolhouses and furnishing the schoolhouses

"with fire and wood and furniture" should fall upon everyone who had the care of a child between five and twenty-one, provided such child attended school "for the purpose of obtaining instruction."

It has been said that the obnoxious provisions of this law were promptly repealed. Early in the year 1827 the succeeding legislature wiped out the essential principle of the free school law of 1825 by an amendment which provided that no person should be taxed for the support of a free school except by his own consent "obtained in writing," a provision that placed the schools on a subscription basis. The new law was called, "An act providing for the establishment of free schools, approved January 15, 1825, and for other purposes" (passed February 17, 1827). The section relating to taxation was as follows:

> SEC. 4. *No person shall be taxed without his consent.* No person shall hereafter be taxed for the support of any free school in this state, unless by his or her own free will and consent, first had and obtained, in writing. And any person agreeing and consenting shall be taxed in the manner prescribed in the act to which this is an agreement: Provided, that no person shall be permitted to send any scholar or scholars to such school, unless such person shall have consented, as above, to be taxed for the support of such school. . . . .

The General Assembly of 1829, which was also reactionary with regard to educational matters, passed a new school law, which again provided that no person was to be taxed for the support of free schools unless he gave consent in writing. This law also contained a disastrous provision for the sale of school lands as soon as proper authorization could be obtained from Congress. The support of education thus became, except for small sums derived from the permanent school fund, dependent on what was really a system of voluntary subscriptions, which meant that not only the children of those parents

who were indifferent to education but the children of parents who were poor or unduly thrifty were alike unprovided for and unprotected. Schools were only for those children whose parents were either well-to-do or willing to make sacrifices for the sake of their children's future. Four years later, the school law[1] of 1833 added a provision that there was to be "gratuitous instruction" for all "orphans and children of indigent parents residing in the vicinity." In general, however, pauper children were not compelled to go to school. A pauper child was bound out as an apprentice with a provision in the indenture that he was to be "taught to read and write, and the ground rules of arithmetic."

Unwilling to tax themselves for the support of schools, the early legislators of Illinois were only too quick to take advantage of any help that might come from the federal land grants, and the wasteful method of alienating for a song the lands that were destined to be almost fabulously valuable was soon inaugurated. The General Assembly of 1831, without waiting for congressional sanction, passed an act[2] providing for the immediate sale of those sections of land "numbered 16" in each township, which the state was supposed to hold as a trust fund for the education of its children.

[1] The law of 1833 was entitled "*An Act to provide for the application of the Interest of the Fund arising from the sale of the school lands belonging to the several townships in this state.*" Sec. 4 of the law prescribed in detail the method of keeping the attendance and provided that the teacher should "add together the number of days which each scholar residing in the proper township" had attended his school, and the total number of days attendance was to be the basis on which the school commissioner should apportion the income of the school fund, provided it were "accompanied by a certificate from a majority of the trustees of the school . . . . setting forth that . . . . said teacher had, to the best of their knowledge and belief, given gratuitous instruction in said school, to all such orphans and children of indigent parents residing in the vicinity, as had been presented for that purpose by the trustees of said school."

[2] Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

As a result of the unwillingness or inability of the people to provide schools, the majority of the children of Illinois were without any chance of schooling. An article in a contemporary journal, the *Annals of Education*,[1] said that in 1831 only about one-fourth of the children between four and sixteen years of age attended school during any portion of the year. The schools that existed were kept open only a few weeks in the year and were miserably equipped and taught.

Discouraging as was the educational situation at this time, the hope of a free school system was by no means dead. Societies were organized to promote the cause of free common schools, and "addresses" and "memorials" were circulated as propaganda in behalf of public education. In February, 1833, an educational convention was held at Vandalia, then capital of the state, and early in the following year the "friends of education" began to make preparation for securing favorable legislation at the next session of the legislature. Popular interest in the subject is evidenced by the fact that more than half the counties in the state sent delegates to the second Illinois educational convention, held at Vandalia, December 5, 1834.[2] This convention, of which Stephen A. Douglas was the secretary *pro tem.*, issued an address to the people of Illinois[3]

[1] Quoted in W. L. Pillsbury, "Early Education in Illinois," in *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1885–86), p. cviii. Another contemporary estimate was that "of 20,000 children in the state nearly one-half were destitute of the means of education."

[2] The proceedings of the second educational convention, also held at Vandalia, are given in full in the *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1885–86) pp. cxv–cxxi. The proceedings of the first convention are also quoted on pp. cix–cxi of this same report.

[3] The opening paragraphs of this address (expressive of the sense of this convention on the subject of common-school education) are indicative of its general character: "*Fellow-Citizens.*—This is an important crisis

urging them "to adopt a system which would carry to every man's door the means of educating his children as the offspring of freeman should be taught," and asking the question, "Shall it be said that Illinois is too poor to educate her sons and her daughters? To hesitate upon this subject is to charge the people with a want of spirit and an ignorance of the character of the age in which they live."[1] That this convention was not prepared to urge any radical measures is indicated by the following extract from the memorial sent to the legislature:

In proposing for adoption any plan of common school instruction in this state, reference must be had to the state of feeling on this subject which pervades the community, as well as to our pecuniary resources. The prevailing public sentiment, we believe, will not authorize the adoption of a system, which will have to be enforced by heavy pains and penalties, and encumbered with all the minute

in the history of our state. Possessing a territory of 59,300 square miles, unsurpassed in any country, and unrivalled in fertility of soil; able to enjoy, at comparatively small expense, easy and cheap transportation for her produce; having an enterprising population of more than 250,000; and subject to an unparalleled flow of emigration; narrow and contracted legislation will retard her onward march, whilst judicious and manly enactments will excite her to honorable exertion, arouse in action her intellect, and develop her mighty resources. And among all the subjects, at this time, calling for liberal and enlightened legislation, we recognize none, having equal claims upon the patronage of the people, with that of the common school education. A well-devised system of primary schools will secure to their families increased prosperity and happiness, and to their country, wealth, glory and freedom.

"Entertaining those views of the great advantages which would result from a general enjoyment of common school education, and of the importance of legislative action in reference thereto, it is well to enquire whether it be now practicable and expedient for the people of Illinois to adopt a system which would carry to every man's door the means of educating his children as the offspring of freeman should be taught."—*Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1885–86), p. cxvii.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. cxix.

details of the school system of many of our sister states, with the management and operation of which, the citizens of this state are unacquainted.[1]

In a communication to the General Assembly during this same year, Governor Joseph Duncan, who as a member of the General Assembly had introduced the free school law of 1825, called attention to the important but neglected subject of education. "Every consideration," he wrote, "connected with the virtue, elevation and happiness of man and the character and prosperity of our state, and of our common country, calls upon you to establish some permanent system of common schools, by which an education may be placed within the power, nay, if possible, secured to every child in the state."[2]

It is interesting to know that Abraham Lincoln was a member of this legislature and that he had already published in the *Sangamon Journal* the following statement of his position on the question of public education.

Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or systems respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject that we as a people can be engaged in. That every man may receive at least a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance on this account alone, to say nothing of the advantages and satisfaction to be derived from being able to read the Scriptures and other works, both of a religious and moral nature, for ourselves. For my part, I desire to see the time when education, and, by its means, morality, sobriety, enterprise and industry, shall become much more general than at present, and I should be gratified to have it in my power to contribute some-

[1] From the "Memorial to the Legislature" adopted in 1834 by the Common School Convention. Quoted in full in *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1885–86), p. cxxi.

[2] Illinois *Senate Journal*, 9th General Assembly, December 3, 1834, p. 23. See also Appendix I, doc. 1, p. 354 of this volume.

thing to the advancement of any measure which might have a tendency to accelerate the happy period.[1]

Fortunately the "friends of education" were rewarded by one substantial measure of progress during the decade 1830–40 —the enactment of a special school law for Chicago.[2] This statute, which became a law in February, 1835, provided for free schools, which were to be supported by an annual tax levy "sufficient to defray the necessary expense of fuel, rent of schoolroom, and furniture." The school trustees were given authority also to levy and collect such additional taxes as were voted by a majority of the legal voters of the district.[3] At this time Chicago had a population of more than four thousand and

[1] Quoted in Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

[2] An act relating to schools in Township Thirty-nine, North Range Fourteen East (*Illinois Session Laws*, 1835, p. 161).

[3] The most important provision of this law was the following: "The legal voters in each school district, shall annually elect three persons to be Trustees of Common Schools, whose duty it shall be . . . . to see that the schools are *free*, and that all white children in the district have an opportunity of attending them. . . . . The said Trustees shall annually levy and collect a tax sufficient to defray the necessary expense of fuel, rent of schoolroom, and the furniture for the same; and they shall levy and collect such additional taxes as a majority of the legal voters of the district, at a meeting called for that purpose shall direct; *Provided*, that such additional taxes shall never exceed one half of one per cent per annum upon all the taxable property in the district; all of which taxes the said Trustees shall have full power to assess and collect."—*Ibid.*, sec. 4, p. 161.

In 1849 the annual report of the School Inspectors described the progress made since 1840 as follows: "Since the organization of our public schools in the autumn of 1840, there has been a change unparalleled in the school history of any western city. Then a few miserably clad children, unwashed and uncombed, were huddled into small, uncleanly and unventilated apartments, seated upon uncomfortable benches. . . . . Now, the school reports of the township show the names of nearly 2,000 pupils, two-thirds of whom are in daily attendance in spacious, ventilated, well-regulated schoolrooms. . . . . The scholars are neat in person and orderly in behavior . . . ."—Quoted in Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

had seven schools. As several of these were supported in part by appropriations made from the school fund of the town, they were properly called public schools.[1] The interest from the township school fund was apportioned among the several teachers of the town in proportion to the number of days of school attendance by the pupils registered in the school. But no teacher could be paid unless a certificate was presented showing that he had "given gratuitous instruction to all such orphans and children of indigent parents residing in the vicinity, as had been presented for that purpose."[2]

The "friends of popular education" and the "friends of the common schools" were very active during the decade 1840–50. In fact, it may be said that during the entire period between the repeal of the free school law in 1827 and the enactment of the law of 1855, which placed the public school system on a firm basis, the cause of popular education was the subject of a constantly growing public agitation. The societies already mentioned held frequent meetings and did their best to arouse an interest in the cause of free education. The burning question that agitated the state was "shall the property of the state be taxed to educate the children of the state?" and, strange as it may seem to readers of the present day, the majority of the voters of the state continued to give a negative answer.

There were, however, influences operating between 1840–50, and even earlier, to further the cause of free schools. The rapid increase in population, which was almost phenomenal in the two decades between 1830 and 1850, went along with a

[1] *Second Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1857–58), p. 295. It should perhaps be noted that Chicago did not become a city until two years after the passage of the special school act of 1835. In 1839 another special act relating to the common schools of Chicago was passed by the legislature.

[2] *Fourth Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Public Schools of Chicago, Year Ending February 1, 1858*, p. 7.

rapid increase in wealth, which meant the breakdown of the most important obstacle in the way of school taxes. Added to this was the very important fact that many of the new settlers of this period came from eastern states where they had grown accustomed to a free school system supported by taxation. In May, 1841, however, it was estimated that more than one-half of the children of the state did not attend school at all and that most of the schools were not in session more than thirty days in the year.[1]

In the year 1841 the Illinois Education Society met at Springfield and in a memorial to the General Assembly made the very moderate proposal that a majority of three-fourths of the legal voters of a township should be permitted to levy a tax "to a limited amount" for school purposes. "What evils," it was asked, "could grow out of trusting three-fourths of the people of a township with the liberty of thus acting for themselves, in behalf of the education of their children?"[2] But although a new school law was passed in 1841, it failed to make the necessary provision for taxation.[3]

[1] *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1885–86), p. cxl.

[2] *Illinois Reports to the Senate and House of Representatives*, 1840–41, Vol. II, p. 151. See Appendix I, doc. 3, p. 360 of this volume for other proposals contained in this memorial, the demand for a state superintendent, etc.

[3] The enacting clause of this law is of interest and shows a willingness to provide for the education of the children of the state in so far as it could be done from the school lands and without any additional taxation for this purpose.

"Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly: That for the purpose of establishing and sustaining common schools throughout the State, and taking care of and using the resources of the State held for purposes of education, the following sections and provisions shall take effect as the law of this State on the first day of July next."—An act making provision for organizing and maintaining common schools. In force July 1, 1841: *Laws of Illinois*, Twelfth General Assembly, 1840–41, p. 259.

In the autumn of 1844 a convention of the "friends of education" was held at Peoria, and an attempt was made to organize a movement to demand local taxation sufficient to maintain a free school in every district during a school term of not less than three months.[1] Some extracts from their "Memorial in Behalf of Public Schools" indicate how strong was the opposition to a school tax and how far from general was the belief in the principle of free state-provided education. Thus the "Memorial" says:

> We come now to consider, finally, the one great requisite of the proposed plan—*Taxation*. . . . . We come out frankly and boldly, and acknowledge the whole system—every effort, is intended only as a means of allurement to draw the people into the grasp of this most awful monster—*a school tax*. . . . . We do not, however, propose coercing any to employ him who prefer to let him alone. All we ask is, to give those permission to use him who are so inclined. Our position is, that taxation for the support of schools is wise and just—that it is, in fact, the only method by which the deficiency for defraying the expense of popular education, beyond that supplied by the public funds, can be equalised amongst those who should pay it.[2]

The "Memorial" calls attention to the fact that in the preceding legislature a bill had been introduced to require a vote of two-thirds of the people of a township to levy a school tax,

[1] A study of all phases of the educational history of Illinois is obviously beyond the scope of this chapter, but it may be noted that the convention of "the friends of education" also demanded the establishment of the offices of state and county superintendent of schools. However, in 1834, in a report made to the General Assembly from the Committee on Education it was stated that as yet it was believed to be inadvisable to appoint a state superintendent, partly because of the "obvious difficulty" of finding a suitable person for such an office and partly because the time had "not yet arrived when his services may be used to the best advantage."—*Journal of the Senate*, 1834–35, pp. 419–33.

[2] *Illinois Reports to the Senate and House of Representatives*, 1844–45, Vol. I, p. 116. See also Appendix I, doc. 5, p. 363 of this volume.

and the "Memorial" earnestly urges that such a decision should rest with a majority.

> Why should there be any fear of abuse under the law? Certainly there is no danger of having too good schools; that too much will be paid to teachers; or that money will be squandered by those who themselves pay it. To require a two-thirds vote looks very much as though one or all of these results were to be feared. . . . . In other public measures, it is considered safe to trust to a majority to manage; and we can see no great danger in education, or its too rapid promotion, that it should be singled out to be used with caution.

Accepting the principles laid down in this memorial, Governor Ford in his first message to the General Assembly in 1844 spoke of the subject of common school education as "of the utmost importance to the well-being of the people; the due provision for which is essential to the perpetuity of enlightened republicanism, and absolutely necessary to a proper and just administration of our democratic institutions." He recommended no definite measure, however, except the establishment of the office of state superintendent of schools with the duty of collecting statistical and other information to enable the General Assembly to legislate "with an enlightened judgment."[1]

The legislature, however, not only accepted the governor's recommendation but went much farther and in 1845 passed a law that recognized the free school principle by providing for local taxation by a two-thirds vote of any school district.[2]

[1] *Illinois Reports to the Senate and House of Representatives*, 1844–45 Vol. I, p. 9. See also Appendix I, doc. 6, p. 368 of this volume.

[2] The provision with regard to taxation is important enough to quote. The act provided that on the first Saturday in May "legal voters of the different school districts of this state, may meet together at some central place in their respective districts, for the purpose of voting for or against levying a tax for the support of schools, of building and repairing school houses, or for other school purposes."—Sec. 84 of "An Act to establish and maintain common schools," *Laws of Illinois*, Fourteenth General Assembly, Session 1844–45, p. 72.

This statute also contained an interesting provision prohibiting the use of any foreign language in the tax-supported schools, as follows: "No school shall derive any benefit from the public or town fund unless the text books used in said schools, shall be in the English language, nor unless the common medium of communication in said schools shall be the English language."[1]

Two years later an attempt was made by the state superintendent of common schools to ascertain how many counties had levied school taxes, but only fifty-seven out of the ninety-nine counties of the state replied to the letter of inquiry sent out, and in only twenty-one of these counties had the tax been levied. It was charged that the large property owners were most strongly opposed to the assessment of taxes for school purposes. They were able to educate their own children without public assistance and were unwilling to have their property taxed for the education of the children of those who had no taxable property.[2]

Fortunately the energies of the "friends of education" never flagged. A great common school convention was held in 1846 in Chicago, the city of free schools, at which the mayor presided. There was, it will be remembered, a special law enabling Chicago to tax herself for school purposes, and the school system which had been established was looked upon with great respect. In the report of the superintendent of common schools to the General Assembly of 1846–47, although the shortcomings of the school system of Illinois were vigorously portrayed, Chicago was pointed out as an example to be followed.

In the county of Cook alone [the superintendent reported] the inhabitants—deeply impressed with the importance of the common

[1] *Laws of Illinois*, Fourteenth General Assembly, sec. 58, p. 64.

[2] See "Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, January 22, 1847," in *Illinois Reports to the Senate and House of Representatives*, Session 1846–47, Vol. II, pp. 51–59.

school education—have raised, by voluntary taxation, under the provision of the law, the large sum of five thousand, two hundred and four dollars, which will continue and increase as an annual tax; and what has been the result? Their schools are in a most flourishing condition. They have erected large and elegant school-houses, procured competent and accomplished teachers, and have two thousand and ninety-five children in daily attendance at these nurseries of learning.[1]

The legislature, however, moved backward rather than forward and amended the law of 1845 by making it more difficult to secure a school tax. The old law had provided for a tax levy by two-thirds of the voters who attended a meeting held for this purpose. The amended law provided that a majority of all the voters of the district must approve the tax. All voters who failed to attend the meeting would in this way be counted as voting in the negative.[2]

But the right of every child to a free common school education was making headway against the property owners who were so unwilling to be taxed. In a report issued by the secretary of state acting as superintendent of common schools it was urged as a duty upon every citizen in the state "to erect upon a permanent basis, a plain practical system of free common schools." It was estimated that there were only schools enough for about three-fifths of the children of the state,[3] although state pride necessitated the comforting reflection that Illinois "in the establishment of her system of schools was far in advance of any of the states at a similar period of their

[1] "Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, January 22, 1847," p. 11, in *Illinois Reports to Senate and House of Representatives*, Session 1846–47, Vol. II, pp. 49–97. See also Appendix I, doc. 7, p. 369 of this volume.

[2] "An act to establish and maintain common schools," February 12, April 1, 1849. *Laws 1849*, p. 177.

[3] Appendix to the "Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, March 1, 1848," in *Reports to the Sixteenth General Assembly of Illinois, Convened January 1, 1849*, p. 109.

history." On January 1, 1849, the day beginning the sixteenth session of the General Assembly, the friends of popular education held a great convention at the state capitol, and at a public meeting held in the House of Representatives a great audience passed a resolution declaring "that the property of the state should be taxed to educate the children of the state."

It was seven years, however, before this principle was finally embodied in a free school law, and a persistent organized effort to secure public understanding of the educational needs of the state was necessary during these intervening years. Governor French discussed the subject in his first message to the seventeenth General Assembly in 1851,[1] and the superintendent of schools in a report to the same session of the General Assembly pointed out the futility of the current systems of levying school taxes.

[1] See *Reports to the Seventeenth General Assembly of Illinois, Convened January 6, 1851*, p. 22. Governor French, however, deals especially with the question of school administration instead of with the necessary but unpopular school tax:

"What seems now mostly needed is a competent number of thoroughly educated school teachers, to give practical efficiency to our common school system. Without these, it is the merest folly to expect to confer that education upon the children of this state which is demanded by our efforts and our resources. If greater caution were observed to secure competent teachers and superintending officers, such as would discharge their duty properly under the laws, there would be less demand for perpetual changes and modifications of the school laws, and the defects imagined as incident to them would vanish. One great drawback upon the efficient working of our common school system, is the want of an energetic and industrious supervision of the affairs of each school. To this end, there is required the labor of a person in each county who shall give his earnest attention to the matter, instead of treating it as a subordinate consideration. It is this alone which will make our school system what it ought to be. I can discover no better plan to answer this purpose, than to require the several county courts to see that this important duty is well attended to, and compel the county to provide for it accordingly."

A majority of all the legal voters of any school district [he said] is now required to levy a tax for building, furnishing or repairing schoolhouses, or for the support of schools. Experience has shown that great difficulty generally exists in inducing a sufficient number to assemble together to secure any efficient action. Mere absence on the part of a few may defeat the most necessary objects; and it has been found next to impossible to make a legal assessment. It is submitted whether it would not be better to allow a majority present at any meeting, legally convened, to determine the question of levying such a tax.[1]

In 1853 Governor Matteson in his inaugural message to the eighteenth General Assembly recommended the "entire repeal of all laws regulating common schools, and the adoption of a simple system, plain in its provisions, supported by a tax upon property, when the school fund is not sufficient for such purpose, and made free to all alike."

Others steps led rapidly to this end. In the same year the secretary of state, still acting as superintendent of common schools, presented an interesting report to the legislature in which he set forth that—

the sum raised by an ad valorem tax, for the support of schools in 46 counties, is reported to be $51,101.14. A large proportion of this has been applied to the building and repair of schoolhouses, but little, comparatively, and that only in a few counties, having been devoted to the payment of teachers and the general support of schools. In 20 counties out of 74, no such tax was levied, and the commissioners of 8 counties, in consequence of the default of the township treasurers, were able to communicate nothing relative thereto.[2]

The report says further,

[1] "Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools for 1849–50" (David Gregg, Superintendent), p. 15, in *Reports to the Seventeenth General Assembly of Illinois, Convened January 6, 1851*, pp. 82–95.

[2] "Biennial Report of State Superintendent of Common Schools for 1851–52" (David Gregg, Superintendent), p. 7, in *Reports to the Eighteenth General Assembly of Illinois, Convened January 3, 1853*, pp. 144–242.

Under the law as it now stands, a majority of the legal voters of districts . . . . have it in their power, by a majority of voters, to levy a tax for the support of schools, thus enabling them, if they see proper, to avail themselves of all the advantages of free schools. I am not aware that in a single instance this has been done, nor can any motive be assigned for the action . . . . unless a preference for the system which now prevails.

In 1854 the office of state superintendent of public instruction was separated from that of the secretary of state, and Ninian W. Edwards, son of a former governor of the state, became the first holder of the new office thus created. In his first report to the General Assembly, written December 10, 1854, he vigorously urged as a "first principle that education should be supported by a tax on property," which would give "to every child of the state a right to be educated and to all an equal right."[1]

The free school law of 1855 followed. This law provided for a state school tax, for unrestrained local taxation, and for a free school, in every district, during six months in the year. The opposition to the free school system had been especially hostile in the southern counties of the state, and only the provision of a state tax, by which the contribution of the richer counties was shared with the poorer counties, enabled the bill to pass. "If those fellows up north want to pay for schools down here we'll let 'em,"[2] a representative from the southern part of the state is reported to have said.

[1] "Biennial Report of State Superintendent of Public Instruction," in *Reports to Nineteenth General Assembly of Illinois, Convened January 1, 1855*, p. 73. See also Appendix I, doc. 10, p. 372 of this volume.

[2] The truth of this statement appears in the returns of the school tax levy. During the first year Cook County paid $65,150.31 in school taxes and received on distribution $29,185.02; while Williamson County in the southern part of the state paid $1,737.04 and received back $4,917.25; Sangamon County paid in $23,132 and received back $11,027; White County paid in $2,579 and received back $5,409; Pope County paid in $5,055 and received back $4,239; and Hardin County paid in $894 and received back $2,417.

The state of Illinois had finally realized the necessity of educating its children, but the provision of free schools was soon discovered to be only one step toward this end. It was recognized by the friends of universal education that a compulsory attendance law was necessary to compel all children to attend the free schools that were provided for them by the state.

CHAPTER III

THE STRUGGLE FOR A COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW IN ILLINOIS, 1855–83

Between the year 1855, when the free school act was passed, and the year 1883, when school attendance was made compulsory, there were comparatively few changes in the school law. The law of 1855 became effective only very gradually. The establishment of an adequate school system was inevitably a slow process even after state taxes for this purpose were forthcoming. Governor Matteson in his message to the General Assembly on the first of January, 1857, reported with satisfaction that there were "few individuals who deny the principle that the property of the country should educate its children." He called attention to the fact that the number of children enrolled in the schools of Illinois had increased from 136,371 in 1853 to 312,393 in 1856, and he described this change in the school enrolment as "one of the most interesting and immediate effects of the new law" and declared further that the results proved "conclusively that a new era is begun in the education of the state."

The effect of the new free school law may be illustrated by the changes that took place in the school situation in Peoria, a town in central Illinois, which had in 1860 a population of 14,045. In 1855 there were four ungraded "public schools" in the town; the teachers were paid according to the number of pupils enrolled, and consequently each teacher admitted to his school all who wished to enter, without regard to age or previous schooling. Moreover, the tuition at these so-called "public schools" was so high as to exclude "many of the poorer children and the children of those who did not sufficiently

appreciate the advantages of learning and school discipline to their offspring." It was said that three-fourths of all the children attending school in Peoria were in private schools, and the public schools were looked upon "as fit only for the poor, and to be shunned by all who were able to pay the high tuition of the private institution." Three years after the free school law of 1855 had been passed, the superintendent of city schools reported that over $10,000 a year had been expended for buildings and sites but that it had not yet been found possible to make the schools "wholly free, dependent only on money raised by taxation for their support." It was claimed that the tuition fee of one dollar a term was collected only from those "able to pay." "The poor," it was reported, "have been allowed to send free, where it was supposed that otherwise their poverty would exclude their children from the schools."[1]

On the whole, the response that came from the people after the passage of the free school law showed that they heartily approved it. Within six years after the passage of the law, the number of schools with the required six months' term had increased from 7,283 to 8,406; the number of districts having no schools at all had diminished from 850 to 649; leaving 288 districts with schools open for a shorter term than the law prescribed. Ninety-four per cent of all the school districts of the state had, according to the report of the state superintendent of public instruction, fully complied with the provisions of the law even with regard to the duration of the school term.[2]

The effect of the new law in Chicago is of special interest. In 1855 improvements in the school system of this city were being made under John C. Dore, a new superintendent of schools. But a school system utterly lacking in organization

[1] *Second Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1857–58), pp. 31–33 of the Appendix.

[2] See *Fourth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1861–62), pp. 5–21.

could be improved only gradually. The chaos that existed prior to this time may be illustrated by the fact that under Mr. Dore's superintendency teachers were for the first time provided with class books and required to register the names of their pupils and to keep attendance records. During the earlier period without any registers either of admissions or of discharges, it had been impossible to tell what pupils were even supposed to be attending school. The new law brought about a great and sudden increase in school attendance. In 1856 the superintendent reported that in spite of increased accommodations[1] the public schools were crowded with pupils, and he estimated that there were still "at least 3,000 children in the city who were utterly destitute of school instruction, or any equivalent for it." During the years 1856 and 1857, 4 new schoolhouses were constructed to provide for about 2,500 additional school children, but the superintendent reported that there were still "hundreds of children who could not be accommodated with seats."

There was another serious aspect to the situation that was just beginning to receive attention. Not only were there still large numbers of unenrolled children, but the children who were enrolled attended school very irregularly. The state superintendent of public instruction reported that the average attendance in Chicago schools was only 31 per cent of the enrolment. With regard to the new problem of non-attendance, contemporary school reports show that the large number of unenrolled and non-attending children was attributed to the "changing char-

[1] In 1855 there were 9 public schools and 42 teachers with about 6,826 pupils. It is of interest that the highest salary paid to a man teacher was $1,200 and to a woman $400. Fifteen years earlier, in 1840, Chicago had only 4 teachers, all men; in 1845 the first public school building was erected (on Madison between Dearborn and State); in 1846 there were 10 teachers, 6 of whom were women; in 1850, 24 teachers, 20 of whom were women; at this time Chicago had a population of 30,000 people. See *Report of the Board of Education of Chicago*, 1855, pp. 22, 23; see also J. W. Cook, *Educational History of Illinois*, pp. 460–62.

acter of the population."[1] There was much concern over the situation, but the only method of meeting the problem of irregularity of attendance was suspension from school—a remedy that was obviously worse than the evil it was designed to cure. Although the attention of those responsible for the management of school affairs was being gradually concentrated on the importance of getting all the children enrolled in the new schools and of insuring, through regularity of attendance, proper returns from the public investment in free education, there was no attempt made as yet to secure a compulsory attendance law. Such changes as were made in the school law during this period related rather to the management of the school fund, the election of school commissioners, the duties of state and county superintendents of schools, the selection of teachers together with their qualifications, and the issuance of certificates.

But there is evidence that the absence of legislation did not mean that conditions were considered satisfactory by those who were directly connected with the schools. As early as 1862 the state superintendent of public instruction noted in

[1] The condition of the poorest children in a large city before the establishment of a compulsory law is almost incredible at the present time. The establishment in England and Scotland of the "Ragged Schools" for the vagrant children of the streets was followed in New York City by the founding of the so-called "Industrial Schools" of the Children's Aid Society. See Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York* (New York, 1872), chap. xii. Thus Mr. Brace, in describing the "wild ragged little children" for whom these schools were founded, says: "Many were ashamed to go to the public schools; they were too irregular for their rules. . . . . The police were constantly arresting them as vagrants. . . . . Though our Free Schools are open to all, ... vast numbers of children are so ill-clothed and destitute that they are ashamed to attend . . . . or they are begging, or engaged in street occupations, and will not attend, or, if they do, attend very irregularly." For an account of the difficulty in compelling such children to attend school in Chicago, see p. 61 and p. 71 of this volume.

his biennial report that "the evils of absenteeism and irregular attendance are among the most serious and difficult of remedy of any encountered in the administration of any system of common schools. While the former injuriously lessens the number of scholars, the latter as perniciously affects the schools themselves."[1] In the annual report of the Chicago Board of Education for the year 1864–65, the organization of a "truant police" system is suggested. Although the schools of this city were at that time greatly superior to any other schools in the state, it was said that a large number of children were enrolled each month and that 10 per cent of those enrolled one month were absent the next. Moreover, even those enrolled for a month attended irregularly during that month, and trivial excuses for absence were noted. It was also pointed out that child labor was a serious factor in depriving children of the opportunity of attending school, and in 1865 the *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* sounded a solemn warning on this subject. "Many a child," it said, "has been sacrificed mentally and morally as well as physically to the pecuniary interest of the parent. Every effort should be made to secure the city against the inroads which avarice and carelessness are thus making upon her prosperity."[2]

A few years later, the state superintendent of public instruction reported that it was undeniable that "after the most favorable interpretation of the statistics that truth will warrant, the evil of absenteeism, irregular attendance, and truancy remains one of gigantic and alarming proportions."[3] The necessity of making school attendance not only free but com-

[1] *Fourth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1861–62), p. 19.

[2] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1864–65), p. 20.

[3] *Seventh Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1867–68), p. 45.

pulsory was discussed at some length in this report.[1] It was pointed out that the "idea of compulsion" might be found in the principle, then well established, "that a state has a just moral claim upon so much of the property of the people as may be required to educate its children, and fit them for usefulness as good citizens." It was going only one step farther to urge that "compulsory school-tax paying . . . . for the noble purpose of educating and uplifting the people" ought surely to be accompanied by a provision that the end sought should not "fail of attainment through the indifference or perverseness of others. The hand that forcibly takes the tax money from the pocket of an unwilling non-resident to support a school in a distant district in which he has no personal interest is at least as rough and arbitrary as would be the hand that forcibly leads the children to the doors of the schoolroom. . . . . If a state may enact a general free school law, it may see that its supreme purpose is not defeated."[2]

A step forward was taken by the Constitutional Convention of 1870, which provided in the constitution itself[3] definite guaranties for the new school system. The eighth article of the

[1] See Appendix I, doc. 11, p. 375.

[2] For further and more detailed discussion of consequences of such legislation, see *Eighth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1869–70), p. 70. In the following year, it was again urged that the state had the power to pass a compulsory education law. The state superintendent reported that one out of every five or six children was not enrolled at all—"not in school for so much as one day." Moreover, of those who did attend, only 65 per cent were regular attendants during the school term, short as it then was. Many, it was said, were "kept at home for their services at labor; in shops and factories, upon the farm and in the house. . . . ."

[3] The other provisions in the constitution of 1870, Article VIII, "Education," are as follows:

"Sec. 2) All lands, moneys, or other property, donated, granted, or received for schools, college, seminary or university purposes, and the

new constitution was devoted to "education" and its first section laid upon the General Assembly the duty of providing "a thorough and efficient system of free schools, whereby all children of this state may receive a good common-school education."

By 1870, then, the free school system was not merely established; it was accepted without question and provided for in the fundamental law of the state. At this time, too, the compulsory attendance movement was making headway. In 1871 a bill which failed to pass was introduced into the legislature providing that all children between eight and fourteen years of age should be compelled to attend school for at least twelve weeks of the school year and that attendance should be consecutive during six weeks of that time. Already, too, the states of Arkansas and South Carolina had incorporated in their constitutions provisions requiring legislative enactment on the subject of compulsory school attendance, and Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Virginia, and other states had constitutional

proceeds thereof, shall be faithfully applied to the objects for which such gifts or grants were made.

"Sec. 3) Neither the general assembly nor any county, city, town, township, school district, or other public corporation, shall ever make any appropriation or pay from any public fund whatever, anything in aid of any church or sectarian purpose, or to help support or sustain any school, academy, seminary, college, university, or other literary or scientific institution, controlled by any church or sectarian denomination whatever; nor shall any grant or donation of land, money, or other personal property ever be made by the state or any such public corporation, to any church, or for any sectarian purpose.

"Sec. 4) No teacher, state, county, township or district school officer shall be interested in the sale, proceeds or profits of any book, apparatus or furniture used or to be used in any school in this state, with which such officer or teacher may be connected, under such penalties as may be provided by the general assembly.

"Sec. 5) There may be a county superintendent of schools in each county, whose qualifications, powers, duties, compensation, and time and manner of election, and term of office, shall be prescribed by law."

provisions empowering but not requiring such action by the state legislature.

In the meantime, in Illinois, the problems of truancy and non-attendance were being recognized as vitally important. In 1872 the state superintendent again discussed what, he said, had come to be looked upon as "the most important school question of modern times"—the question of how the children of the state were to be "protected against the wrongs and evils of illiteracy, and secured in their educational rights." He pointed out that at last the state had "a free school system, well established, thoroughly organized, and in successful operation"; it was therefore possible for the state to deal with the question of what should be done with those parents or guardians who refused to send their children to school.

There is, in short, much evidence to show that the evil of non-attendance was very great and that it was believed to be on the increase. It was said that, "taking all those portions of the state from which reports are at hand, the number of children who are even enrolled, in any given year, averages less than half the total school-going population."[1] For the first time probably attention was called to the fact that the increase of immigration made compulsory school attendance "a grave necessity,"[2] and it is of interest, too, that elaborate arguments were presented to show that compulsory school attendance, or "obligatory education" as it was more popularly called, was both constitutional and expedient. In summarizing his arguments the state superintendent made the following elaborate statement:

I think it has been shown that the legislative department may properly intervene to prevent those who have control of children, from compelling or permitting such children to grow up in ignorance;

[1] *Ninth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1871–72), p. 209.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 224–25. See also Appendix I, doc. 13, p. 380 of this volume.

that such intervention is not an abuse of powers conferred, nor an unwarrantable assumption of powers not granted; that it is no improper invasion of personal liberty, nor of the authority and rights of parents, since it merely enforces the performance of parental duty, which cannot be regarded as an infraction of rights; that it is not inconsistent with rational freedom of conscience; that it puts the right of the child to be educated, above the right of the parent to keep it in ignorance; that it protects the many, who do educate their children, against the counteracting influence of the few, who will not; that it shields the innocent from cruel wrong, since starving the mind is worse than abusing the body; that it is grounded in the belief that to bring up children in ignorance willfully and without cause, is a crime, and should be treated as such; that such conduct on the part of those having the control of children, being a fruitful source of criminality, should be under the ban of legal condemnation, and the restraint of legal punishment; that the allegations as to the incompatibility of such laws with the nature and spirit of our political system, are unfounded, as also are the apprehensions concerning the assumed harshness and severity of their enforcement; that the operation of such laws, in many of the most enlightened states of Europe, is an indication of their wisdom and beneficence, affording an example that may be safely followed; that there is no proof that the masses of our people are opposed to such legislation, but, on the contrary, there is good reason to believe that general enlightenment on the subject, would result in general approval of the measure; that the exclusively voluntary policy has been, and is, but partially successful, while the accelerated influx of foreigners renders the adoption of new measures of education, without delay, a grave political necessity; that the proposed legislative intervention is but an affirmance of the irrefutable truth, that if it is right to tax all for the education of all, then it is equally right to see that all are educated; that it is in the line of a general human right, and of a fundamental right of children, and is compulsory only as that right must be protected against any and all infringements; that it is required, to fully utilize the vast resources already devoted to public education, and to prevent enormous and increasing waste of money, property, and effort; and, finally, that it is demanded by the clearest principles of

justice both to children and taxpayers—by the franchises conferred and implied in the constitution—by considerations of the highest political wisdom, and by the facts and exigencies that now exist in this state, and in every other state of the union.[1]

Attention has already been called to the fact that one of the early methods of securing attendance of children at school in the absence of a compulsory attendance law was to discipline the non-attending child by expelling him from school altogether. The state superintendent gravely pointed to this method of meeting the evil, as a legitimate one:

A scholar may lawfully be expelled for wilful and obstinate refusal to comply with any reasonable rule or regulation in regard to absence or tardiness. The right and duty of directors to make and enforce such regulations as will secure regularity and punctuality of attendance (those prime requisites of a good school) have been affirmed by several of our circuit courts, and by the supreme courts of many states, notably and recently by that of Iowa. The principle is inherently sound, being essential to the accomplishment of the purpose for which public schools exist; and it may be considered as now well settled and determined by the highest judicial authority. All that is required of directors in the premises is prudence and good sense in their rules, coupled with a proper regard for the rights and feelings of parents. No rule or requirement on the subject should be so framed as to involve any needless and offensive inquiry into the domestic affairs of families. Nothing of that kind is necessary to the accomplishment of the purpose aimed at.[2]

The superintendent of schools in Chicago in his report in 1876 was wise enough to point out that the suspension of wilful non-attendants was only "a reward for their truancy." Attention may be called, in passing, to the fact that this mode of punishing a non-attending child is not yet obsolete and that,

[1] *Ninth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1871–72), pp. 224–25.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

unfortunately, in spite of our "compulsory" laws, suspension is still sometimes used as a method of punishing recalcitrant truants. Recently, for example, a little Greek boy who had been loitering in a poolroom for several days was brought into Hull-House by an officer. A resident of the House who knew the boy and knew that he was supposed to be attending a near-by Greek school asked why he was not there. "Because," he said, "the Greek schoolmaster said either I must come always or else I should never come," and he had, of course, preferred the second alternative.

During the decade 1870–80 the subject of compulsory school attendance was earnestly advocated by the school authorities, and in 1879 the newly created State Bureau of Labor Statistics[1] began the long struggle for a child labor law. As early as 1877 the legislature had attempted to regulate child labor by passing an act which made it unlawful for anyone having the custody of a child under fourteen years of age to allow him to engage in occupations "injurious to health or dangerous to life or limb."[2] This was entitled a law "to prevent and punish wrongs to children,"[3] and was designed to punish those who were directly promoting the dependency or delinquency of a child rather than to regulate child labor in general. In this same year, however, a law "providing for the health and safety of persons employed in coal mines," was passed prohibiting the employment in coal mines of boys under twelve

[1] *Illinois Session Laws*, 1879, p. 61: "An act to create a Bureau of Labor Statistics and to provide for a Board of Commissioners and a Secretary."

[2] Among the occupations enumerated were "wire-walking, dancing, begging, or peddling . . . . as a gymnast, contortionist, rider or acrobat . . . . or vocation injurious to the health or dangerous to the life or limb of such child" (*Session Laws*, 1877, p. 90). This was the so-called "Mendicant and Acrobatic act."

[3] *Session Laws*, 1877, pp. 90–91. See also *Revised Statutes*, 1885, chap. 38, sec. 53, p. 391.

and of all women and girls; in 1879 the age limit was raised from twelve to fourteen for illiterate boys and in 1883 the age was raised to fourteen for all without regard to schooling.[1]

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in its first biennial report, pointed out the necessity of a general child labor law and its corollary, a compulsory education law. The provisions asked for by the bureau were, however, very inadequate—the prohibition of the employment of children under ten in factories and stores and three months' schooling each year for all children under fourteen. "The people of this state," said the report, "cannot afford to allow any increase of ignorance through the failure of parents and guardians to provide the younger generation with at least the elements of that education which is necessary for the welfare of the state as well as being a prerequisite to the poorer people in providing for themselves and their families a way by which they may know how to live better."[2]

And in December, 1882, the bureau again called attention in its second biennial report to the urgent necessity of making school attendance compulsory. It was estimated that nearly 25,000 children between the ages of eight and fifteen years, about 5 per cent of the total number of children of these ages, were not attending school at all; it was also estimated that about one-third of the non-attending children were kept out of school to work, and that the others were being neglected and were

[1] *Session Laws*, 1877, p. 140; *ibid.*, 1879, p. 207; *ibid.*, 1883, p. 118; *Revised Statutes*, 1885, chap. 93, sec. 6, p. 822. This law remained substantially unchanged for twenty years. In 1887, age affidavits were required of the boy's parents. Mine inspectors had early (law of 1872, amended 1877) been provided and they were to look after these provisions along with others. The age affidavit was to be kept on file for the inspector to see if he wished (*Session Laws*, 1887, p. 233; *Revised Statutes*, 1887, chap. 93, sec. 6).

[2] *First Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois for the Year Ending January 12, 1881*, p. 237.

becoming delinquent.[1] In the following year, 1883, the first compulsory education law of Illinois was passed.

More than twenty-five years of agitation had been necessary to secure legislation providing for the support of the schools by taxation. In the quarter of a century that followed the passage of the free school law, the principle that the state might tax the property of its citizens to provide for the education of its children was embodied in the new constitution of Illinois and the legislature had taken another important step in advance by recognizing its right to make school attendance compulsory. But much remained to be done. It was left for the next quarter of a century to extend the provisions of the compulsory law and, by prohibiting child labor during the period of compulsory school attendance, to make possible its enforcement.

[1] "Very many of the other two-thirds are growing up not alone in ignorance but in vice, and from them will come the larger part of our criminals; for, though education and virtue do not always go together, the vicious are most commonly ignorant." A report of the superintendent of the Pontiac Reformatory was quoted to show that out of 241 boys connected with the Reformatory in the two years preceding, 136 could not write, 120 knew nothing of arithmetic, 39 could not read, and 124 others could read only in the first or the second reader. The superintendent commented that "this shows a bad state of things, when we consider that the average age of the boys committed was fourteen years and six months" (*Second Biennial Report of Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois* (1882), p. 374).

CHAPTER IV

THE GROWTH OF THE COMPULSORY SYSTEM, 1883–99

The first compulsory education law of Illinois, that of 1883, was entitled "An act to secure to all children the benefit of an elementary education," but the inadequate provisions of the law made the fulfilment of its purpose impossible. All children between the ages of eight and fourteen were required to attend school for a period of twelve weeks each year unless excused, and children could be excused by the board of education or the school directors "for any good cause." No provision was made for the enforcement of this law beyond the statement that "any taxpayer" could sue the board of education for failure to enforce it.[1] It was, however, made a defense to any suit if it could be shown (1) that the child's "mental or bodily condition" prevented school attendance; or (2) that the child had "acquired the branches of learning ordinarily taught in public schools"; or (3) that no public school had been "taught within two miles . . . . for twelve weeks during the year." Within a few years the failure of the law to effect any real improvement in school attendance became apparent. Friends of compulsory education did not hesitate to declare the law wholly unsatisfactory; and in 1888 a committee of the Chicago Board of Education declared that it was "entirely ineffective and practically incapable of enforcement." At this time, five years after the law had been passed, it was estimated that in the state of Illinois there were 133,329 children under fifteen years of age who were not in school,[2] and that

[1] *Session Laws*, 1883, p. 167.

[2] *Eighteenth Biennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois* (1888–90), p. lxxxiv.

large numbers of children had never been enrolled in school at all.

The question of the possible enforcement of the law of 1883 was discussed by the Chicago Board of Education in 1888. A request from a member of the board that a committee be appointed to deal with the question of its enforcement was referred to the Judiciary Committee. This request, which was submitted by a foreign-born member of the Board of Education, Hon. Charles Kozminski, was as follows:

To the President and Members of the Board of Education, in Session:

In the year 1883, the State of Illinois enacted a law for the compulsory education of children between the ages of eight and fourteen years. This law makes it compulsory upon every person having the control and charge of any such child to send it to a public or private school for a period of not less than twelve weeks in each school year, unless such child is excused from attending school by the Board of Education. Under this law, it is the duty of the Board of Education to prosecute every person who violates the law, and for neglecting its duty, the Board of Education or its members are punishable by fine. In the City of Chicago, large numbers of children, through the selfishness, neglect, or indifference of parents and guardians, never see the inside of a schoolroom, but grow up to manhood or womanhood without the training and education so necessary in a republican form of government and so essential to the welfare of the community.

Therefore, Be it Resolved, by this Board, that a Committee of three be appointed, whose duty it shall be forthwith to confer with the authorities of the City of Chicago, for the purpose of enforcing the compulsory education law, against parents and guardians who violate the same.[1]

The committee to which the resolution was referred reported back that "in the opinion of the committee" the law of 1883 was not "nugatory, invalid, or inoperative" as had been claimed. Attention was called, however, to the lack of school

[1] *Proceedings of the Board of Education of Chicago, September, 1888, to August 9, 1889,* p. 41.

accommodations, and it was pointed out that "if there were enough schoolhouses, it would not be found a hard task to get the children to attend," but that the law could not possibly be enforced until there were enough schools "conveniently located to receive pupils." The committee, however, although it reported that very little could be accomplished "in the way of compelling the attendance of children without greater facilities than are now at the command of the board," made certain recommendations in the belief that something should be done "to show the people that the spirit of the law is cordially recognized by the board." The recommendations included a provision for publicity regarding the requirements of the law and the board's intention to enforce it "where practicable"; free textbooks for indigent pupils; the appointment of a prosecuting attorney; some provision for educating pauper children; the assignment of teachers to charitable or correctional institutions for children on request of the authorities; and, finally, the establishment of a department of compulsory education.[1]

The attention given to this subject by the board was undoubtedly due in part to the public indignation over the failure to enforce the compulsory education law. The Chicago Woman's Club had sent to the board a petition stating that—

> WHEREAS, The appalling increase of crime among youth, the large number of vagrant children, and the employment of child labor in the city of Chicago is fraught with danger to the commonwealth:
>
> *Therefore*, We, the Chicago Woman's Club, respectfully ask your honorable body immediately to take the necessary measures to secure the enforcement of the Illinois statute of 1883, providing for compulsory education.

The reply to the petition merely stated that the board had the question of compulsory school attendance under consideration. A committee of the board was appointed to consult with

[1] *Proceedings of the Board of Education of Chicago, September, 1888, to August 9, 1889*, p. 75.

other organizations and individuals interested in the subject and to draw up a new law to "cover all the requirements of the case." This committee on January 9, 1889, reported that it had prepared a digest of the laws of the different states relating to compulsory education and that it had called a public meeting "to which members of the committee and other bodies interested in the enforcement of the compulsory education law" were invited. The committee also reported that it believed that an attempt should be made to enforce the old law and that the mayor had said that he "was ready to direct the entire police force to aid in the enforcement of the old law as it now stands." Resolutions were adopted at this same board meeting providing for the appointment of three attendance officers, one for each division of the city, who were to be under the immediate direction and control of the special Committee on Compulsory Education. These attendance agents were to investigate and to report cases arising under the Compulsory Education act, and were instructed to "make daily visits to the police station in their respective districts and receive the police reports of the names and addresses of the children apparently between the ages of eight and fourteen years, whom the police have found on the streets during the school hours of any school day." The resolutions further declared that the Board of Education considered it the duty not only of the teachers but of the engineer and janitor of every school to report to their principal the names and addresses of all children between the ages of eight and fourteen years in their respective school districts, who were believed not to have attended any school for twelve weeks during the preceding school year. The list of all children so reported was to be transmitted by the principal to the clerk of the board at the close of each week.

Interest in the subject continued to increase with the hope of obtaining a more satisfactory law from the legislature then in session, and on January 19, 1889, a large public meeting was

held in Chicago to discuss the need of an effective compulsory system. On January 23, 1889, at the request of the committee on Compulsory Education, the board voted to increase the number of attendance agents to seven, "three of whom shall be ladies"; a clerk to "collate" their statistics was appointed, and it was arranged that registers should be supplied to each of the police stations, in which cases brought to the attention of the police might be recorded.

At the same meeting the superintendent of schools called attention to the relation between non-attendance and child labor and reported that, as a result of the agitation regarding the enforcement of the compulsory education law, some employers had refused to continue to employ boys under fourteen without a permit from the Board of Education.

A few months later the chairman of the Committee on Compulsory Education reported to the Board of Education that more than 5,200 cases of non-attending or truant children had been investigated by the attendance agents, and "that notices had been sent to the parents of 173 children who had failed to comply with the provisions of the Compulsory Education act, and that these cases were now ready for prosecution." These prosecutions, however, were never proceeded with, for in the meantime the movement for a new compulsory education law had been successful.

Three bills, one relating to compulsory education, another to child labor, and a third to truant children, all of which had been adopted at a citizens' meeting and presented to the Board of Education, were later indorsed by the board and forwarded to the General Assembly at Springfield. The child labor bill and the truant bill died in the committee room at Springfield, and a compulsory education bill already pending in the legislature was accepted by the board as a substitute for its own bill. This substitute measure, which became a law on July 1, 1889, was unanimously passed by the Senate, and had only six votes

recorded against it in the House. The new law was considered far from satisfactory by those who desired a stringent and easily enforceable statute, but it was, in the words of the president of the Chicago board, accepted "as a 'lick and a promise,'" in the belief that attempts to enforce it would demonstrate the necessity for amendments. The president also pointed out the fact that the necessary provision for truant children and for child labor regulation which had been demanded by the board had been refused by the legislature. "They properly go with the compulsory education bill," he declared, "and it is necessary to have them passed in order to have a compulsory education act in good working shape."

The new law of 1889 was in several respects much better than the old law of 1883, although it still set a very low educational standard. The total period of compulsory attendance was increased from twelve to sixteen weeks, and attendance was required to be consecutive during eight weeks. A further improvement was contained in a provision requiring the board of education in every school district to appoint one or more truant officers. The act also provided that children might attend not only public schools but also any private schools "approved by the Board of Education," but it was expressly stated that only such schools as taught the common branches in English might be approved.

In Chicago during the following summer careful preparations were made in order that the new law might be enforced when the school term began. A superintendent of compulsory education and twelve attendance agents were appointed. Special circulars explaining the law to parents, to school principals, and to employers were drawn up and sent out by the Board of Education. Fifty-five thousand circulars were printed for parents and guardians in seven different languages, German, Italian, Bohemian, Swedish, Polish, Yiddish, and Norwegian. A circular letter was sent to the principals of 171

private and parochial schools on September 3, asking for the list of children of compulsory education age who were attending school; but up to November 13 only thirty-two replies had been received.[1]

The failure to pass a child labor law left open, of course, the greatest temptation to the children and their parents to disobey the compulsory education law. The Board of Education recognized this difficulty, and, since there was at this time no law prohibiting child labor except in the mines and in a few especially dangerous occupations, it was decided to make an appeal to the public spirit of the merchants and manufacturers who employed children between the ages of seven and fourteen and to ask their aid in enforcing the new law and in getting these children into school. The following circular was therefore sent to all proprietors of shops, stores, and factories, and a blank was inclosed to be returned to the board with the names of all the children employed in any establishment:

The object of this circular is not only to inform you that the Compulsory Education Law enacted by the Legislature of the State of Illinois, went into effect July 1, 1889, but to ask your hearty co-operation during the coming scholastic year, by not employing any children between the ages of seven and fourteen years, as set forth in the law.

The Board respectfully, yet urgently, desires your assistance in this direction as an incentive to idle and pernicious parents and guardians, that they shall undertake the burden of labor and support

[1] The text of the letter was as follows: "In order to carry out completely the Compulsory Education Law of the State of Illinois, as enacted by the Legislature and now in force, and avoid the evasive and untruthful replies of children, parents or guardians, as to their attending other than the public schools, will you be kind enough to fill up the accompanying blank of the pupils attending your schools, between the ages of seven and fourteen years, and such additions as may occur from time to time?"—*Proceedings of the Board of Education of Chicago, August 21, 1889, to July 9, 1890*, p. 105.

for their families, and permit the tender children to attend school and receive an education that will adapt them to labor more intelligently and with increased ambition. . . . .

Out of 2,591 employers to whom this circular was sent only 300 sent any reply. A few employers expressed disapproval of the law, but the great majority of those who replied not only assured the superintendent of schools of their willingness to obey the law but declared their sympathy with its purpose and provisions.[1] A further step toward the control of child labor was the appointment of a special attendance officer for work in the shops, stores, and factories. Unfortunately the children who sold newspapers or blacked boots on the streets had no employers whose co-operation could be sought. These children who were most in need of help were then, as now, protected with the greatest difficulty.

In spite of the efforts made by the Board of Education to carry out the provisions of the law, many difficulties were encountered in attempting to enforce it. Large numbers of people could not be made to believe that the legislature had the power to compel them to send their children to school. The condition of many of those children who were brought to school under compulsion showed how disastrous the old policy of non-enforcement had been. The superintendent reported, for example, that 3,528 children were "subjects for reform schools," and the Committee on Compulsory Education called

[1] It is of interest that in these replies from employers, according to the superintendent of compulsory education, "many warm encomiums were expressed upon the benefit of the law, with the assurance that it would receive their hearty support; that child labor should not be permitted; that education was the salvation of the Republic and that they would not employ children between the ages designated in the law." That children were extensively employed at this time is indicated by the fact that a single mercantile firm reported 175 children under fourteen years of age employed in its establishment (*Proceedings of the Board of Education of Chicago, August 21, 1889, to July 9, 1890*, p. 105).

to the attention of the board "the large number of incorrigible children and the necessity of, by some means, providing them with at least the rudiments of an English education." The committee reported that it believed that—

> this class of unfortunates, who, either from improper training and unwholesome surroundings at home, or from an unnatural perversity of disposition evade their school duties, and who, when brought to school by the attendance agent, cause sufficient disturbance to have their absence heartily desired by the teacher and principal should be placed in a separate room or building and under a different system of discipline.

The neglected condition of some of the non-attending and truant children in Chicago at this time is described in the first report of the superintendent of compulsory education. Many parents, it was said, regarded their children "as so many money-making machines and kept them in filth in order to create sympathy for them." These children, it was said, could not be reached by the policy of moral suasion that the board had decided upon, and a delegation of citizens called and asked that the law be invoked in their behalf.

The complaint was made that these neglected children had become so lawless and undisciplined, and their physical condition so distressing, that their presence created great disorder in the schools in which they were enrolled. The superintendent of compulsory education thought that children of this type were not fit to be sent to school with other children and that an ungraded school or room was needed, where they could be placed until they acquired habits of cleanliness and order and until the danger of disturbing the discipline of the schools might be removed. Many children brought in from the streets and alleys, it was found, were "not fitted for the ordinary schoolroom, being physically as well as mentally incapacitated by their previous life for quiet and continuous study."

Moreover, these children soon dropped out of school or were suspended for misconduct.

The suggestion of an ungraded room was soon followed by a demand for a parental school. As the president of the Board of Education said in his annual report:

> One of the greatest needs of the city, made almost imperative by the compulsory law, is a family school in each of the several sections of the city with facilities for some simple work, as well as study, under the charge of well-prepared teachers, in which the little waifs of the community, now growing up in want and wickedness, may be tenderly cared for, and trained to habits of industry, intelligence, and honorable citizenship.

Nearly a decade, however, was to pass before the legislature of Illinois passed the parental school law that was so urgently needed.

The report of the work of the new truant officers during the first six weeks of the school year showed that the officers had investigated the cases of 2,191 truant and 2,691 non-attending children, a total of 4,882 children, of whom only 1,523 had been returned to school. The superintendent was impatient of the method of moral suasion and thought that the law should be invoked to punish persistent violators.

> This much had been accomplished [he reported] without invoking the aid of the law, in a quiet persuasive manner; but there is another side of the question. There are a very large number of children who cannot be reached without the aid of the law. Many are at work in stores and factories who should be in the schools, who have no valid cause or excuse for not being there, not even poverty, for the entire number of such as reported are only 265 cases up to the present time.[1]

[1] *Proceedings of the Board of Education of Chicago, 1889–90*, p. 106. The following extract from the superintendent's report is of interest: "One attendance agent reports that during the past week, no reports were received whatever from six schools. This would indicate that truancy is on the wane. The agent claims it is the success of compulsory education." It may, of course, have been the indifference of the principals.

Much to the surprise, evidently, of the superintendent, poverty was alleged as the excuse for non-attendance in a very small number of cases.

Throughout the year, however, the policy of moral suasion was adhered to and no arrests for violating the compulsory education law were made in Chicago. The Board of Education prided itself on the fact that there had been "not a single instance of interference with parental authority, no prosecution or persecution." This policy was continued during the next year, and the Committee on Compulsory Education reiterated with evident satisfaction that, although another year had gone by, there had still been "no interference with parental authority, no arrests had been made, not a single case of prosecution or persecution, the strength of moral persuasiveness had been used in taking the children off the streets and placing them in school." The president of the board in his report for the year 1889–90, noted that while the new statute had not accomplished all that its ardent friends desired, there had nevertheless "been a clear step foward"; he commended the law as sound in principle and called attention to the fact that the discussion concerning its enforcement had helped to educate the public to a realization of the right of the state "as a measure of public safety, to require that all children within its borders shall be given some elementary education."

By way of summary it may be said that a great deal of interest and honest effort on the part of the Board of Education had gone into giving the law a fair trial in Chicago, and it may be taken as a measure of the progress made in the last twenty-five years that, from the standpoint of today, moral suasion would in general be regarded as a poor substitute for the more vigorous methods of enforcement that have been adopted since that time.

Although poverty was alleged as an excuse for a very small percentage of the cases of non-attendance and truancy, it was

a peculiarly hard excuse to meet in those few cases. The Committee on Compulsory Education authorized the superintendent "in all cases of extreme poverty or infirmities" to use discretion in granting permission to work and to attend night school, but an organized effort was also made to provide for the children who alleged lack of shoes or clothes as a reason for absence from school. An auxiliary committee of the Chicago Woman's Club founded the School Children's Aid Society,[1] an organization still in existence, whose object is to provide new shoes and clothing for needy school children; and the aid of such charitable organizations as existed was enlisted. The county board was asked to appropriate "relief funds for clothing and feeding poor children whose parents or guardians are unable to support them while attending school." Rather grandiloquently it was said that "while the county provides homes, food, clothing, shoes, medicine, and medical attendance for the criminal, the pauper, and the invalid, it is fair to presume that it is within

[1] The School Children's Aid Society has survived through all the changes of the last twenty-five years and is still an active organization. Founded in 1888 as an auxiliary committee of the Chicago Woman's Club, it is now maintained largely through the collection that is made for its support at Thanksgiving time each year in the public schools. The receipts from the children's offerings amounted to nearly $16,000 in 1915. In addition, donations of clothing are received by the society. In spite of the great increase in the number of charitable relief societies and in spite of the activities of the county agent who in 1913, for example, furnished 15,603 pairs of shoes to school children, the society is still maintained for the purpose for which it was founded, viz., to provide new clothing for children who would otherwise be unable to attend the Chicago public schools. Cases needing assistance are recommended by principals and teachers, records are kept of aid given, and although it is said that "each case is investigated," these investigations must be very inadequate, and the recommendations of the different principals very largely relied on. The society has no salaried officers and pays no rent. Its distributing rooms are in the centrally located Haven School on Wabash Avenue near Sixteenth Street. During 1905, 4,160 children were helped and the total expenditures were $6,043.36; during 1915, 8,767 children were helped and $15,921.32 expended.

their province to provide clothing and shoes for indigent children, so that they might attend school, and in a measure save them from the pernicious effects of bad company and often very evil associates."

The net results of the first year's work under the new law showed that the cases of nearly 17,500 children had been investigated by the truant officers of Chicago and that 7,380 of these children had been placed in the public day schools, 983 in evening schools, and 1,436 in private or parochial schools—a total of 9,799 children placed in school. That is, the law, imperfect as it was, had brought nearly 10,000 children into the schools of Chicago. More than this, the law seems to have been similarly beneficial all over Illinois. The public school enrolment for the state as a whole showed an increase of 16,454 pupils over the preceding year. It is important to note, however, that in other parts of the state as well as in Chicago, whatever improvement in school attendance occurred was not due to prosecutions. Not only in Chicago, but also in Springfield and in the other cities of the state, not a single suit was brought, and the state superintendent charged that, although penalties had been inflicted in a few cases in rural districts, the purpose of the prosecution had been "to bring the law into disrepute and to use it as an instrument for arousing prejudice."

But it must not be overlooked that the law had been completely ignored in some districts and that, although school attendance had increased, the purposes of the law were far from being fulfilled. Thus the state superintendent reported at the close of the first year of its operation:

> The law has been very imperfectly executed. In many places no attempt has been made to put it in force. The unreasonable clamor against it has often dissuaded its friends from attempting its enforcement. It is quite certain that the obstructions put into the way of a reasonable execution of this law have had the effect greatly to discourage those who desire to use it as a means of doing good.

Conditions changed very slightly during the second school year following the enactment of the law of 1889. The number of attendance officers in Chicago had been increased from 7 in 1889 to 14 in 1890 and was further increased to 18 in 1891. The number of cases of truant and of unenrolled children investigated had increased from 17,463 to 20,325, while the number returned to school had increased from 9,799 to 11,254. It was also reported that, during the school year 1890–91, 820 working permits had been issued to children of compulsory school age "whose necessities had compelled them to secure employment." But in the attempt to regulate child labor an important step forward was soon to be taken.

Unfortunately there was, in addition to the difficulties of enforcement already alluded to, a powerful influence working against the law throughout the state—the hostility of the parochial schools. The opposition of the German Lutheran schools in particular seems to have been aroused by the provision of the law requiring instruction "in English" during the period of compulsory school attendance. Although a large number of the children brought in under the law, 1,500 in Chicago alone had been entered in parochial schools, and although the state as a whole showed an increase of 6,729 in the number of children enrolled in these schools, where there had been an actual decrease in enrolment during the preceding year, the friends of the parochial schools undoubtedly tried to prevent the enforcement of the law.

In Chicago the controversy with the parochial schools seems not to have been so acute as in the rural districts, although the report for the year 1891–92, the second year of the operation of the "new" compulsory law, shows their opposition still active. In the annual report of the Board of Education for the year 1892 the following statement occurs regarding the parochial school situation:

While there has been a controversy over some of the special provisions of the law relating to the language in which the children should be instructed, and the supervision of private schools, there had been no controversy that has been brought to the Board of Education. From the first action of enforcing the law, the attendance officers were instructed to notify the parents or guardians whose children did not attend school, that they must go to school somewhere for the time indicated in the statute, which was sixteen weeks. At no time has there been any demand made that the children should attend the public schools when the parents expressed a wish to have them attend a private school.

The biennial report of the superintendent of schools in Cook County for the period 1888–90 contained the following interesting statement on this subject:

It was soon learned that many of the German schools in the county could not provide for the proper instruction of their children even in English reading and writing, not including the other branches named in the law. The importance of being able to speak and write in English was generally acknowledged, but that knowledge of arithmetic, geography, and history should be required in English was resisted. In many of the German schools an honest effort was made to teach English. In some of them the teachers were not qualified to teach it, and the children in such localities do not speak the English language.

In the villages and city of Chicago, where the children come in contact with the English-speaking children, there is no difficulty in acquiring the language. In the rural districts where the children do not hear the English language spoken, either at school or in the home, there certainly is need of enforcing instruction in English.

It is generally conceded that the state has a right to demand that children shall have an opportunity to fit themselves for citizenship. That children should acquire the ability to read and write the English language, in which the laws of the land are written, is generally conceded. That every person should be able to perform his duty as a citizen, to serve on juries, and to be a witness without an

interpreter, ought not to be disputed. Ignorance in a country where the people govern is dangerous to its institutions.

The state superintendent of public instruction in his report for 1889–90 makes a statement which seems to have been designed to allay any misgivings or fears that may have been felt by the friends of the parochial schools. Thus he says:

> The compulsory education law does not necessarily interfere with parochial or other private schools. In the enactment of it there was no intention of such interference. It specially provides that attendance at such schools shall be accepted in lieu of attendance upon public schools. . . . . The authority conferred by the law upon the board of directors does not empower them to ignore the facts of the case, and of their own whim refuse to recognize a private school. . . . . And the statistics of the year show, conclusively, that no such injury to private schools has resulted from the execution of the law. On the contrary, it seems to have helped them.

Unfortunately the parochial school opposition led to the omission of the requirement of compulsory instruction in English from the later compulsory laws, and the subsequent development of the bilingual schools described in a later chapter must be regarded as an educational and social misfortune.[1]

[1] For a discussion of the bilingual schools, see chap. xviii, "The Special Problem of the Immigrant Child."

CHAPTER V

PARALLEL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ILLINOIS CHILD LABOR AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION LAWS, 1893–1916

The compulsory education law of 1889 was strengthened in July, 1891, by the first general child labor law ever passed by the legislature of Illinois. Unfortunately, however, the new child labor law was quite as crude and unsatisfactory as the compulsory education laws that were already on the statute books. It was made unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to employ or hire any child under thirteen years of age without a certificate, but the board of education was given authority to excuse any such child from school and to authorize his employment, provided his labor was needed for the support of any aged or infirm relative and provided the child had attended school at least eight weeks in the current year. The system of allowing children to work if their relatives seemed to be in need meant, of course, that the children most in need of the protection of child labor and compulsory education laws would be entirely excluded from their benefits. The law was also weak in that it contained no provision for enforcement. While the child under thirteen could not be employed unless he had a certificate from the board of education, no machinery was provided for issuing such certificates, nor was any proof of age required to show that children who were employed were over the compulsory attendance age.

In Chicago the way had been prepared for a child labor law by the City Council, which had passed an ordinance prohibiting the employment of children under fourteen unless they had special work-permits issued by the superintendent of compulsory education. During the year a special attendance officer

was detailed by the Board of Education to visit factories and to notify employers of the provision of the law, but the work of this single inspector was necessarily ineffective, and the superintendent of schools reported that those who had investigated the subject believed that many children under fourteen years of age were working in factories in different parts of the city. Moreover, under the authority of the Board of Education many children had been "excused" from school because of their poverty. During the year, 1,077 children between the ages of ten and thirteen years were officially "excused" from school and given work-permits for the following reasons: 288 because of "poverty," 261 because of "intemperance" (presumably the intemperance of their fathers who were thus rendered in need of their children's earnings), 508 because they were orphans or deserted by their parents, and 20 for miscellaneous reasons. All that Chicago could do for her dependent children was to give them work-permits and excuses from school, allowing them to work in factories and support themselves and their intemperate parents.

Recommendations looking toward certain definite improvements in the compulsory education law were made by a committee of the Chicago Board of Education in 1892 at the close of the school year. Two important changes were suggested: first, that the law should require compulsory school attendance of all children under thirteen years of age, during the entire time that the schools were in session; and, second, that provision should be made for the enforcement of a penalty against parents or guardians who wilfully deprived their children of the benefits of an education. The committee pointed out that, as a result of the fact that no penalty had ever been imposed for the wilful violation of the compulsory law, many people had come to disregard the official notices which were sent to them, and positively refused to comply with the requirements of the law. Many instances, it was said, had been reported where

parents and guardians had "wilfully compelled young children to labor that they might profit by their small earnings. Had the law been enforced in a few of the extreme cases of such violations, as reported by the attendance officers, the effect would have been wholesome on a large number who would have immediately complied with the reasonable provisions of the statutes."

The report of the committee also called attention to the lack of provision "for the care, maintenance, and education of neglected and wayward children." The schools were unable to meet the needs of these children who were frequently brought into the schoolrooms off the streets, who were unaccustomed to a disciplinary routine, and who were a source of demoralization to the other children. Separate schools were recommended for these children, where special provision could be made not only for their schooling but "for their bodily care and proper preparation for contact with others in a schoolroom." The wastefulness of the failure to provide for these children was emphasized. According to the report,

> the statistics of the Police Court, the County Jail and Bridewell, show a large number of children who annually become violators of the law, and are placed under arrest. They are then supported at public expense in a building built by public taxes, and cared for and watched by paid officers. These children have become criminals, and a charge upon the city or county by somebody's neglect. The Board of Education has not been authorized to care for this class of children. Nobody cared for them until they became violators of the law, and enemies to good society. Provision should be made at once for the detention and support of neglected children, and they should receive a training and instruction that will lead them to habits of cleanliness, order, submission to authority, and a useful life.

But at this time a new and dramatic influence was brought to bear upon the compulsory education situation—the influence of Hull-House, Chicago's first "social settlement," which had

been established a few years earlier by Miss Jane Addams in the heart of the great industrial neighborhood of Chicago's "West Side." Among the little group of social reformers who joined Miss Addams in the early days of the settlement was Mrs. Florence Kelley, who for nearly a quarter of a century was to be the embodiment of the public conscience on the subject of child labor and its attendant evils. The residents of the new settlement, living where they saw day by day how inadequate and ineffective the child labor and compulsory education laws really were, set about securing the necessary improvements in these laws. Mrs. Kelley, as a first step, suggested to the Illinois State Bureau of Labor Statistics that an investigation of the sweating system should be made in Chicago, for she believed that large numbers of children who should have been in school were at work in sweatshops all over the West Side. Not only was the suggestion adopted, probably because of the social sympathies of the radical Governor Altgeld, but Mrs. Kelley was commissioned as a special investigator to make this inquiry; and as a result of the presentation of her report to the next legislature, a special legislative committee was appointed to report on Chicago institutions.[1] The report of this special committee, supported by the untiring efforts of the labor unions and by the propaganda carried on by Miss Addams and Mrs. Kelley, secured the passage in the next legislature of a new "act concerning the education of children" and a new child labor law,[2] both of which went into effect on the first of July, 1893.

Unfortunately, the new compulsory education law was still far from being the effective measure that was needed. It

[1] See *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, pp. 198–208, for an account of early child labor conditions as seen by Miss Addams and her fellow-residents at Hull-House.

[2] This was called "An act to regulate the manufacture of clothing, wearing apparel and other articles."—*Session Laws*, 1893, pp. 100–101.

marked no real advance over the old law and in some respects was even less satisfactory. It contained the same provision as the law of 1889 requiring sixteen weeks' school attendance during the year, and it extended the required period of consecutive attendance from eight to twelve weeks. But the old provision that the compulsory regulations could be met only by attendance at schools offering instruction "in English" was dropped to please the friends of the parochial schools, and the appointment of truant officers, which in the earlier law had been mandatory on boards of education, was in the new law made permissive[1]—two distinctly retrograde steps.

The new child labor law, on the other hand, was a brilliant piece of social legislation for that time. Mrs. Kelley's impetuous fire and her vivid and relentless pictures of child labor conditions had been irresistible. The new law provided that children under fourteen could no longer work in "factories, manufacturing establishments, and workshops"; that children under sixteen must furnish affidavits giving their age; and that every employer must keep a register and post a wall list containing the names, ages, and addresses of all children under that age employed in his establishment. Most important of all, the law carried provisions for its enforcement by providing for a department of factory inspection with a chief factory inspector and twelve deputies, and Governor Altgeld distinguished himself by appointing Mrs. Kelley as the first chief factory inspector of Illinois. The law also contained an advanced provision, which unfortunately proved to be ineffective, giving the factory inspectors the right to demand a doctor's certificate of physical fitness from any working child under sixteen and to prohibit the child's employment if a certificate could not be obtained.

[1] In the law of 1889 it was provided that "it shall be the duty of the Board of Education to appoint . . . ." while the new law of 1893 merely provided that "the Board of Education may at their discretion appoint one or more persons."

The law was still weak in many respects, and Mrs. Kelley never allowed the public to forget that, however much had been done, there was still a great deal that had been left undone. The children of Illinois were not yet as well protected as the children of Massachusetts or New York. The new Illinois law, for example, applied only to manufacturing establishments, and it was not until 1897 that its provisions were extended to "offices, stores, and mercantile establishments." Nothing was done and up to the present time nothing has yet been done by the state for the street-trading children, who are still waiting for protection. Mrs. Kelley, in the chief factory inspector's report for 1894, spoke of the neglected condition of these children; there were, she said, among them thousands of children between seven and fourteen who were still not attending school,

> a horde of little peddlers of fruit, vegetables, and other wares. These children learn no trade and form only habits of roaming the street, irresponsible and lawless. When children are expelled from school at eleven years of age, and prohibited from working in factories until fourteen, they are apt to fall into this class. They could be reached by requiring every peddler or vendor under sixteen years of age to obtain a license from the State Factory Inspector, and prohibiting all such work for children under the age of fourteen years, and for illiterate children under sixteen years.

The experience of a few months with these two laws clearly demonstrated one fact—that a well-enforced compulsory education law must precede or accompany a child labor law if child labor is really to be prohibited or even regulated. A good compulsory education law, well enforced, may in fact prevent child labor, whereas a child labor law unaccompanied by a compulsory education law takes children out of the factories and workshops only to throw them into the street.

The very interesting sections dealing with the subject of child labor in Mrs. Kelley's first annual report are reprinted in an appendix to this volume, and attention may be called, in

passing, to the fact that these first four reports of the state factory inspectors of Illinois, prepared while Mrs. Kelley was in charge of the office, are like no other official reports that have ever been issued in the state, so moving and human are they, so full of indignant satire, so honest in their relentless description of conditions as they really existed, with no attempt to cover up or conceal the evils with which the state must deal. The first of these remarkable "annual reports" shows that one of the most lamentable results of the inadequacy of the compulsory education laws was a shocking state of illiteracy among the children. Children unable to spell their names, or the names of the streets on which they lived, were found at work every day by the indefatigable inspectors of this new state department. In her report the chief inspector declared:

> Where these children are under fourteen years of age, they are turned over to the compulsory attendance officer of the Board of Education, but for those over the age of fourteen the state prescribes no educational requirement, and unless they look deformed, undersized, or diseased, the inspectors have no ground upon which to withdraw them from their life of premature toil. And in no case can we insist upon rudimentary education for them.
>
> In this respect the Illinois law is far from abreast with the laws of Massachusetts and New York. In Massachusetts every child must attend some school throughout the period during which the public schools are in session until fourteen years of age. And in towns and cities in which there is manual training in the schools, the children must attend school until the completion of the fifteenth year. New York goes even further, and empowers her inspectors to order peremptorily the discharge of any child under sixteen years of age who cannot read and write simple sentences in the English language. Such a clause as this last one would cause the transfer of many hundreds of Illinois children from the factory to the schoolroom.[1]

[1] *First Annual Report of the Factory Inspectors of Illinois* (1893), p. 14.

Another difficulty encountered by the chief factory inspector was the fact that many of the children who were in the greatest need of schooling were expelled or suspended for bad conduct soon after they were placed in school. Before 1893 the school authorities had already called attention to the neglected state of these children, but professed themselves helpless until a parental school law should make it possible to care for them outside of the regular schoolrooms.

Instead of suspending refractory and vicious children from our schools [said the annual report of the Chicago Board of Education] provision should be made so that a child who is not manageable with better children, shall first be placed under the care of special teachers in a *disciplinary school*, and when they become unmanageable by parents and teachers, they should be confined in a parental home or school, thus providing a means of properly educating and training every child.[1]

The school census of 1894 showed 6,887 children between the ages of seven and fourteen out of school, a fact to which Mrs. Kelley repeatedly called public attention. The work of

[1] *Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1893), pp. 65–67: "Suspension is the extreme penalty which can be imposed upon a wilfully disobedient pupil. Before this can be done, every possible moral influence is exerted to secure obedience, appeals are made to parents to co-operate with the teachers, finally temporary suspension from school for some repeated offense or rebellious act results in permanent withdrawal from school. In many instances these children are made to work when they leave school, and through the discipline of continuous hard work finally become law-abiding citizens. But many who drop out of school become a menace to good government, vagrants, lawbreakers, ultimately criminals and inmates of the jail, bridewell, reform school and prison. . . . . No provision is made for their restraint, until they violate some law under which they can be arrested as criminals, and then they are committed to the jail, bridewell or prison. . . . . Other cities have also discussed the problem and the school board of Boston has secured the enactment of a law under which they are building a parental school. The time has come when Chicago must act in this matter."

her own department was, she reiterated, entirely nullified, so far as the protection of the children was concerned, by the inability of the school authorities to place in school the children removed by her inspectors from factories and workshops. The intimation is plain in Mrs. Kelley's reports that the Chicago Board of Education was not doing its duty, and she repeatedly urged that the prosecution of parents who disobeyed the law should be made mandatory upon boards of education which then boasted of the fact that they relied wholly on "moral suasion."[1]

In her second annual report Mrs. Kelley says:

Although the law prohibits absolutely the employment of any child under fourteen years of age in manufacture, yet the children under fourteen years can never be wholly kept out of the factories and workshops until they are kept in school. At present the school attendance law is almost useless, at least in Chicago, where the largest number of children have been found at work. Although the Chicago Board of Education employs attendance agents, yet children leave school to sell papers; to carry cash in stores, and telegrams and messages in streets; to peddle, black boots, "tend the baby," or merely to idle about. Unruly children are expelled from school to suit the convenience of teachers. Principals of schools have sent to the inspectors children eleven years old, with the written request that permits be granted to enable the children to go to work (in violation of the factory law) because in each case the child is "incorrigible." As no factory can be a better place for a child eleven years old than

[1] See for example the *Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1893), p. 65: "The enactment of a new law by the legislature to protect children in their educational rights did not make it necessary to change the organization of the department of compulsory education. No enforcement of the penalties for violation of the statute has ever been attempted in Chicago. The school officers notify the parents or guardians of children who are under fourteen years of age and who do not attend any school, that the law requires each child to attend some school, at least sixteen weeks in the year, and urge compliance with the law. Probably three thousand children were either brought into the schools for the first time during the year or were returned after absence."

a reasonably good school, this request voices the desire of the principal to be relieved of the trouble of the child.

Of the thousands of children out of work, it was charged that "hundreds are seeking work in shops and factories, and when they find work and the laws of the state are thereby violated, the task of prosecution, which should fall in part at least on the Board of Education of Chicago, devolves upon the State Factory Inspectors alone." The charge was also made that out of 103 children reported to the Department of Compulsory Education by the factory inspectors during the three months of the fall term of 1893, only 31 were ever placed in school. Some of the remaining children were not found, others were given permits to work in stores, others were dropped as "incorrigible," and finally, "in fifteen cases the mere statement of the parent that the child was over fourteen was received by the compulsory department as sufficient reason for dropping the case, although in each such case the parent declined, in dealing with us, to make affidavit to show the child to be more than fourteen years old." In the report for 1894, Mrs. Kelley charged that the child labor law was being nullified by the indifference of the educational authorities. She wrote vigorously as follows:

> The humane intent of the first clause of Section 4 of the workshop and factory law is obvious: that the child under fourteen years is to be safeguarded by the state against employment injurious to it. This intent is nullified if the child is not kept in school, but drifts from one workshop into another, or from the factories into the streets. We therefore recommend that the legislature make the prosecution of derelict parents not as it now is, merely discretionary with the local school boards, but mandatory upon them; as the prosecution of manufacturers is made mandatory upon the factory inspectors by Section 9 of the factory law.

Mrs. Kelley also pointed out that although the state factory inspectors had obtained the conviction of twenty-five employers

upon thirty-three charges of having in their factories or workshops children under fourteen years of age, not once had any of these parents been prosecuted under the school laws for permitting their children's unlawful employment and absence from school.

As a result of Mrs. Kelley's persistent and disquieting charges, the standing Committee of the Board of Education on Compulsory Education again took up the much-vexed question as to the value of the Department of Compulsory Education. This committee recommended, as other committees had done, the establishment of a parental school for non-attending and incorrigible children[1] and such changes in the law as were necessary to make mandatory the prosecution of indifferent parents who were neglecting their children. The final and astonishing recommendation was that the Department of Compulsory Education should be either curtailed or abolished, since its efforts on behalf of the children most needing service were ineffectual. The committee not only recom-

[1] The report of the committee contains the following statement: "These are largely the children of widows, and no law reaches them, for it would be obviously unjust to fine the mother for the non-attendance of the child when what she most desires is to secure such attendance.

"Many parents have come to the Chairman of this Committee reciting those conditions and asking counsel as to what to do to prevent their children from drifting into a criminal life, as the mothers recognized would be the result if they were left to grow up under these street influences. Some provision should be made for such children by establishing and maintaining a parental school to which they could be sent on application of parents for a longer or shorter time as circumstances required. Such schools are to be found in England and in some of our older states, and they pay for themselves a thousand times over in the prevention of criminality and pauperism.

"The second class, which the law fails to affect, are the children of dissipated and careless parents, through whose neglect the child is permitted to grow up in ignorance and crime. The fine and imprisonment should be enforced against such, but the imperfections of the present law are such that, with the best efforts of the committees and the attorney of the board, no case has ever been made out to the satisfaction of the law." —*Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1894), pp. 155–59.

mended the abolition of the department, but suggested that the funds used for the salaries of the attendance officers be diverted to support a kindergarten system. The whole report was an open confession of failure on the part of the board in face of the chief factory inspector's running fire of criticism. The Department of Compulsory Education had failed, according to the committee, "in getting into school the large class of non-attendants." It was pointed out that the average attendance of children returned to school through the agents was only thirty-five days (six weeks of the school year), and that the non-attendant children, for whom the law was chiefly designed, usually remained in school but a few days at a time.

They are brought in [said the report], stay a day or two, disappear; are again hunted up, come for a day or two, and stop, and so on. Under these conditions your Committee feel justified in asking if the money spent on the Compulsory Department could not be better expended and do more good if used to extend the kindergarten system[1]. . . . . Your committee therefore beg leave to suggest that

[1] The following extract further explains this somewhat vague kindergarten plan proposed by a committee of which two well-known club women were members: "If the child could be put in the kindergarten during the years that, too young for the school, he is, by the poverty or neglect of parents, left to the demoralizing influences of the streets, he would never acquire the tastes and habits that lead him to truancy in later life. Your chairman believes that prevention is better than cure, that coaxing is better than coercion, that the mental and moral influences of the kindergarten cannot be overestimated in shaping the child's nature during the years when well-to-do parents are giving their best thought and time to their children but when the parents of the poor child are compelled to neglect his mental and moral nature in order to provide bare sustenance for his physical.

"Careful research into the history of pauperism and criminality seems to show that the child's bent is fixed before his seventh year. If the influences surrounding him before that time are for good, if he has proper moral training, if his life and habits are carefully guarded, the majority of healthy children will go on with a vigorous and healthy moral and physical development. If childhood is neglected, if difference between right and wrong, if in fact the evil instead of the good is developed up to that time, in the majority of cases no after effort will atone, and the child will mature lawless and uncontrolled, and the final end will be the jail or the poorhouse."

in another year the Department of Compulsory Education be curtailed and abolished, and that, in its place, the kindergarten be maintained, believing the latter will do far more for the prevention of truancy than the former can do under the most favorable circumstances to overcome the habit once formed.

The astonishing recommendation of this committee that funds set aside for the support of the compulsory attendance officers be used to instal a kindergarten system was not adopted, and the Department of Compulsory Education was retained, although it continued to be thoroughly ineffectual. In 1896, after three years' experience as chief factory inspector, Mrs. Kelley announced in the annual report of the chief factory inspector that the compulsory school law remained "a dead letter," that no prosecution had ever been undertaken for its enforcement by any board of education, and that the weakness of its provisions continued to serve as an excuse for continued failure to prosecute parents for violating it. Children were as illiterate as before the passage of the laws of 1893, Mrs. Kelley affirmed, and she also charged that many of those nominally in school were attending non-English parochial schools. "The educational status of the children found at work shows no improvement," her official report states with no uncertain emphasis. "From garment and cigar-shops, children are still taken into court as witnesses in factory cases who speak no English, some of them having lived several years in the state in dense foreign colonies; and going to school, if at all, where English is not taught." Mrs. Kelley also attacked the City Council for reducing the school appropriation and the Board of Education for its failure to make adequate school provision for its children:

> Until there are schools for the children, and a compulsory education law that is enforced, the factory inspectors cannot keep all the children under fourteen years out of factories and workshops.

While an effective factory law is the best possible supplement to a good compulsory education law, neither can take the place of the other; and the attempt to enable the factory inspectors to do the work of truant officers can never be successful. . . . . In manufacturing centers there is the same lack of school accommodations to which attention has been called in previous reports, as one great reason for the illiteracy prevailing among working children in this state. In Chicago, the City Council has taken a distinctly retrograde step in reducing the school appropriations by $2,000,000 for 1896–97, thus checking the building of school houses, and depriving thousands of working-class children of the opportunity for school life which primary schools are supposed to extend to all alike. That the working children are thus vitally affected, the report of the Chicago Board of Education for 1896 shows.

Unfortunately the school board had brought this rebuke down upon itself by complaining the year before that it found enough to do in making provision for the children who were willing to come to school without compulsion, and the implication was that the board felt that it might be excused from worrying about the children who did not wish to attend its schools. The following statement in the annual report of the board for the year 1894–95 regarding the compulsory education situation called forth much criticism:

The fifteen truant agents, appointed by the Board of Education to visit different sections of the city and to notify the parents of children who do not attend school, that the law requires them to do so, have done the best they could under the existing conditions. The law is ineffective, because no penalty can be enforced. Some good is accomplished by serving notices upon parents that the children should attend school, but wherever parents are indifferent or deliberately keep their children from school, no effort has been made to enforce the law. Under the city statutes relating to vagrants, children who are found upon the streets could be arrested, and the parents could be reached by the police. Chicago fails to give this

class of children the education and training which would redeem many, and bring them to better citizenship. The Board of Education very naturally finds much to do in caring for the two hundred thousand children who are enrolled and glad to come to school without compulsion.

It has been said that Mrs. Kelley never allowed the state to believe that anything more than "an initial measure" on behalf of its neglected children had been secured. As early as 1894 she had pointed out in one of her reports that, compared with the codes of protective legislation of the states of Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Rhode Island, the Illinois law was

merely an initial measure intended to mitigate certain conspicuous evils. While prohibiting the employment of children under fourteen years of age, it does not, like the New York law, place a premium on the school attendance of such children by prohibiting their employment to the age of sixteen in case they fail to read and write simple English. While empowering the inspectors to demand health certificates for certain children, it provides no physicians to furnish the certificates, but leaves them to be furnished to all comers by any physician. While permitting thousands of children to go to work at fourteen years of age, it affords them no safeguards against falling down elevator shafts, burning up for want of fire escapes, being mangled in unguarded belting and shafting, or mutilated by uncovered saws and unprotected stamps. It provides for no notice to the inspectors of accidents occurring in factories, and empowers no one to require modern ventilation and sanitation where employes are poisoned by foul drains, bad air or hurtful fumes engendered in their work.

Viewed as an initial measure [Mrs. Kelley conceded, and it was her only concession], the Illinois law must be regarded as a promising beginning; but compared with the codes of the other states it must be admitted that it does not effectively guard the employes in factories in their life, limbs, health or intelligence; and is far from insuring the people of the state against an increasing burden of orphan children

and of cripples, consumptives and other invalids, deprived of the power of self-support by preventable evils in the places in which they work.

The conditions so vividly described by Mrs. Kelley caused so much dissatisfaction that, in 1897, a new child labor law was enacted which was strengthened by a new compulsory education law. The old child labor law, which had applied only to factories, was now extended to "offices, stores, and mercantile establishments," and some ineffective but well-meant protective measures for children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen were added. The hours of work for such children were limited to ten in one day and sixty in one week, and they were prohibited from working at extra-hazardous occupations. The most important improvement relating to the better enforcement of the law was a provision that put the burden of proof on the employer in case of violation. The presence of a child under sixteen in any work-place was declared to be *prima facie* evidence of his employment.

Along with these substantial improvements in the child labor law went some unsubstantial additions to the compulsory education law. The new law, called "An act to promote attendance in schools and to prevent truancy" was still very weak. The period of compulsory attendance, a meager sixteen weeks of the school term, remained unchanged, but there was a slight improvement which made the period of consecutive attendance begin at a definite time, that is, with the opening of the school term for children under ten years of age, and on December 1 for those over ten. This provision, of course, made the enforcement of the school attendance period more practicable. The appointment of truant officers was made mandatory, as in the old law of 1889, instead of permissive as in 1893, but the much-desired provision for a parental school was not included in the statute. The improvements made were obviously too slight to be of any real value. In fact, nothing short of compulsory

attendance during the entire school term, and a good parental school, could really take the children off the streets and place them in the schoolroom. Hope of any successful results from the new laws was short-lived.[1] Renewed pressure for an adequate law was brought to bear on public opinion, on the Board of Education, and on the legislature, by the report of an educational commission that had been authorized by the City Council in December, 1897, appointed by Mayor Harrison in January, 1898, and which reported in 1899. This commission in dealing with the subject of compulsory attendance reported that the principle of compulsory school attendance had become well established, but that a more adequate law was needed in Illinois, and also recommended the "establishment of one or

[1] That such hope was entertained is clear enough. The Committee on Compulsory Education reported in 1897: "The great difficulty heretofore has been in a defective law. Evidence to convict negligent parents has not been easy of access. The recent legislature, however, remedied some of these defects, and now mandatory features have supplemented evasive provisions.

"It has been optional with boards of education in our state as to whether a department of compulsory education should be maintained. Now there is a strict requirement in this regard, and we herewith present the statute in force which makes it possible to institute legal proceedings against offending parents or guardians."—*Forty-third Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1897), p. 155.

After a year's work under the law the superintendent of compulsory education reported as follows: "The law under which we are working is much better than the old one. In nearly all instances we succeeded in bringing delinquent parents to terms. We have served about fifty notices, and in only one case the department deemed it necessary to prosecute, and the negligent parent was fined. We should rightfully have the power to arrest all these little beggars, loafers and vagabonds that infest our city, take them from the streets and place them in schools where they are compelled to receive education and learn moral principles"; and again it is emphatically stated that "we certainly should not permit a reckless and indifferent part of our population to rear their children in ignorance to become a criminal and lawless class within our community."—*Forty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1898), p. 170.

under fourteen and as "necessary and lawful employment" excuses children between fourteen and sixteen from school attendance, these children are not as yet effectively protected.

The legislature of 1903 not only made radical changes in the compulsory education law, but also revolutionized the child labor law, so that it provided both for a shorter working day and working week for children under sixteen and for the extension of its provisions to occupations not hitherto brought under regulation. It also provided that, before a child could lawfully be employed, he must obtain an age and school certificate, testifying both that he was of the required age and that he was able to read and write simple sentences.

By the provisions of these two laws, which were passed in 1903, compulsory school attendance was for the first time made possible. The old difficulty of ascertaining whether a child had attended school for the required period was done away with by extending the compulsory period to cover the entire school term. The old inducement to fraudulent evasion of the law by the false affidavits of parents that their children were of working age was ended by the abolition of the affidavit system and by the substitution of the new age and school certificates which should be issued by the school authorities as evidence of the child's "right to work."

After reviewing the history of these attempts at compulsory attendance legislation, we are inevitably brought to the question, How far is education really compulsory in Chicago or Illinois today? Is the present law entirely adequate and satisfactory both in its provisions and in the methods adopted for its enforcement? It will be the purpose of the chapters that follow to attempt to answer these questions.

fourteen. Unfortunately, however, children between fourteen and sixteen were to be excused if "necessarily and lawfully employed during the hours when the public school is in session." This exemption practically nullified the extension of the law. The failure of this attempt to provide for children between fourteen and sixteen will be discussed later.

PART II

PRESENT CONDITIONS AND METHODS OF TREATMENT

CHAPTER VI

EXTENT OF TRUANCY AND NON-ATTENDANCE IN CHICAGO: A STUDY OF THE ATTENDANCE RECORDS OF NINE SELECTED SCHOOLS

An account has already been given of the machinery used by the Department of Compulsory Education in Chicago, and the history of the statutes requiring this machinery has been traced. It is now possible, therefore, to discuss the problem of school attendance as it presents itself today in Chicago and in the suburban districts of Cook County. A study of non-attendance in some of the smaller towns, villages, and rural districts in the state would also be of great interest, but the scope of the present study has been necessarily restricted to Chicago and its suburbs.

The first question of interest in connection with such a problem relates to the extent of truancy and non-attendance. That is, in studying any social problem, it is important in the beginning to obtain if possible some definite facts regarding its size and importance.

It is difficult, however, to make an exact statement regarding the number of truant or non-attending children in Chicago during the past year or during any previous year. Statistics are published each year by the Department of Compulsory Education, showing the number of children reported to the truant officers, the number of children brought into the Juvenile Court, and the number of parents who have been brought into the Municipal Court on the charge of violating the compulsory education law. But these statistics represent only the cases dealt with by the Department of Compulsory Education and not the total number of children or parents who have violated the law.

The largest group of children dealt with by the Department of Compulsory Education are those reported to the truant officers for investigation. Table I shows the number of children reported to the truant officers for investigation and the number of cases in which the children were returned to school from the time of the organization of the department in 1889 to the present time.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF CHILDREN REPORTED TO TRUANT OFFICERS FOR INVESTIGATION AND NUMBER RETURNED TO SCHOOL*

YEAR	INVESTIGATIONS	RETURNS		
		Public Schools	Private Schools	Total
1889–90	17,463	8,363	1,436	9,799
1890–91	20,325	10,581	673	11,254
1891–92	12,906	7,157	435	7,592
1892–93	14,683	6,024	1,714	7,738
1893–94	8,375	3,025	202	3,227
1894–95	11,878	4,052	365	4,417
1895–96	13,121	5,710	210	5,920
1896–97	13,990	6,482	80	6,562
1897–98	16,596	9,143	101	9,244
1898–99	17,195	9,027	67	9,094
1899–1900	31,593	16,490	291	16,781
1900–1901	33,684	18,621	178	18,799
1901–2	33,002	18,411	174	18,585
1902–3	33,617	17,134	136	17,270
1903–4	36,516	21,611	237	21,848
1904–5		25,247	350	25,597
1905–6		.....†	.....†	26,888
1906–7		30,014	1,052	31,066
1907–8		33,912	3,583	37,495
1908–9	See	38,122	8,362	46,484
1909–10	explanation	44,472	12,525	56,997
1910–11	in text	48,770	12,601	61,371
1911–12		50,301	13,554	63,855‡
1912–13		.....†	.....†	59,696‡
1913–14		46,769	11,295	58,064‡

*It should be noted that these figures show not the number of children but the number of "returns" to school. One child may have been returned several times.

†Corresponding figures not published.

‡Does not include truants returned to school, since the returns to public and private schools are not given for absence due to truancy in these years.

Beginning with the year 1904–5, the reports of the department do not give separate figures for "investigations" and "returns." The totals from that date given in this table under returns are referred to in the reports of the department as "investigated and returned" or "returnable absences investigated."

Obviously, the increase in the number of children for whom the services of the truant officer were needed should be compared with the increase in the total number of children attending school. Unfortunately, however, the reports of the department give, not the total number of children, but the number of returns made, and one child may have been returned several times. It seems unprofitable, therefore, to attempt to make a more exact comparison of the work of the department in different years by percentage increases, but attention should be called to the fact that the increase in truancy indicated by the increase in the number of children returned to school is probably not greater than it should be in comparison with the increase in the total number of children attending school.

Attention should be called to another point of importance indicated in the table—the sudden increase in the number of children from private schools, beginning in the year 1907–8. This increase is to be explained by the extension of the authority of the Department of Compulsory Education to the private schools in March, 1908, which will be discussed in a later chapter.[1]

For these last four years then, there have been each year about 60,000 cases of absent children referred to the truant officers for investigation and for the most part returned to school. How far the absences of these tens of thousands of children were justified, there is no way of determining. Certainly only a very small percentage were "wilful truants." Statistics published

[1] See chap. x, "The Habitual Truant and the Schoolroom Incorrigible," p. 154.

in the annual reports of the Board of Education throw further light on this point. Thus, for the year 1913–14, the last year for which a published report is available, there were in addition to the 58,064 children whose absences were investigated, 3,399 children who are described in the report as "wilful truants." Records of the Juvenile Court show further that there were during the same year 496 boys and 3 girls brought into the Juvenile Court, and the reports of the board show that 1,236 parents were warned by the Department of Compulsory Education that unless their children were promptly placed in school they would be prosecuted in the Municipal Court by the department because all other methods had failed to make them comply with the provisions of the compulsory attendance laws.

Although the number of truant children who have passed through the hands of the Department of Compulsory Education makes a large total, these figures represent only a small proportion of the truancy and non-attendance of any year. For there are always children absent without cause who are merely warned by the principal and not referred to a truant officer; there are also those children whose absence from school has escaped the notice of the school authorities entirely; and finally there are the children supposed by the principal and the teachers to be absent for what is considered sufficient cause or "a good excuse." As a matter of fact, in a large majority of cases, only a very careful investigation made in the home can show whether or not the child's absence is really necessary or not.

Children "excused for cause" are, of course, regarded by the school authorities, not as wilful truants, but as non-attending children absent for excusable reasons and therefore not in need of discipline. But the effect of non-attendance is as disastrous to educational progress as is truancy itself, for whether the child's absence is sanctioned by the parents or is in opposition to their wishes, that is, whether the child is a non-attendant

or a truant, the effect upon his school work is the same. He misses the school session, falls behind in his school work, and suffers the demoralizing consequences of irregularity. There will, of course, always be a residuum of non-attendance due to causes that cannot be removed. What is needed is that this residuum shall be an "irreducible minimum." A study of non-attendance and its causes is therefore a matter of supreme educational and social importance, in order that any absences beyond this irreducible minimum may be prevented. The vast, the overwhelming majority of all children receive their only education in the elementary schools, and much effort has been made to improve the work in these schools. The time that these children spend in the grades is too valuable to be lost; they have neither high school nor university beyond; they will never have any help from private teachers or from travel, and they will learn little from their environment; they have in most cases only uneducative and uninteresting work before them, and if they do not get from the school an interest in reading or continued self-development, their educational loss is likely to have its further effect in a deterioration of character.

The effect of non-attendance can only be ascertained by carefully compiled statistics of absences. But in Chicago as in other cities, published school reports do not contain such statistics. "Average daily attendance" throws no light on this problem. What is needed is a table or series of tables showing the number of children who have been absent different periods of time varying from one day or one week to longer periods of time. Since tables of this sort are not now available, it seemed important to undertake a careful study of the attendance records of a few schools in the hope that statistics of non-attendance in a small number of selected schools might throw light on the whole problem of school attendance in Chicago.

In order to be able to formulate, if possible, some definite statement regarding the problem of non-attendance as distin-

guished from the more specialized problem of truancy, records of nine elementary schools in Chicago were analyzed. These schools were selected from different sections of the city and as far as possible from among different foreign colonies, because it was recognized that the problem of non-attendance might be greater in some groups than in others. All the districts selected, however, were in the crowded sections of the city, where the question of school attendance is of the utmost importance since absence from school represents loss of time which will never be made up in ways that are possible to children from more fortunate homes. In the well-to-do sections of the city, the question of attendance, while it may be a school problem, is not a social problem of importance as it is in the poor and congested neighborhoods.

The elementary schools selected for this study of records were the following: (1) the Jackson School, in the Nineteenth Ward on the West Side, predominantly Italian but with a considerable number of Russian-Jewish children; (2) the Skinner School, near a rooming-house district in the Eighteenth Ward on the West Side, in which there are many American children; (3) the Tennyson School, which is also on the West Side but in a more prosperous neighborhood, in which the children are chiefly Irish and American; (4) the Kosciuszko School, in the northwestern part of the city in a congested Polish territory; (5) the Holden School, on the South Side, in a neighborhood chiefly Lithuanian and Polish; (6) the Thomas School, on the North Side, which is predominantly German but which has many Polish children; (7) the Moseley School, in the so-called "black belt" on the South Side, with few children that are not colored; (8) the Keith School, which is also in a colored neighborhood but which also has a good many Irish, American, and German children; (9) the Jones School, in a downtown district which is largely Italian but in which a large variety of nationalities are represented.

Statistics of absences must, of course, be studied together with the total period of enrolment, since, obviously, a child who has been in a school for ten months has ten times as many opportunities for absence as the child who has been there only one month. It was necessary, therefore, to ascertain from the attendance books the number of months that each child had been on the books of the school, before attempting to collect data relating to absences. Table II shows for the nine selected schools the total number of children enrolled during the year and the number of months during which the different children were counted members of the school.

This table shows that the total enrolment of these schools for the entire year was 10,120, and that the period of enrolment was accurately ascertained for 9,757 children. Of these, 4,863, or approximately 50 per cent, were in attendance during the ten months of the school session. The remaining half of the children were members of these schools for periods of varying length, from less than one month to nearly ten months. During the weeks or months when they were not counted enrolled members of these schools, these children may have escaped school entirely or they may have attended some other school. The latter alternative unquestionably applied to the great majority of the children who were enrolled less than ten months, and the following chapter, which deals with the transfer system, shows that during a single year many children attend several different schools, so that the period of enrolment in each is necessarily short. The next step, of course, was to ascertain the regularity of attendance during the period of enrolment. But since it was not possible to obtain the attendance records for the entire year for the children who were enrolled for a short period, and since their records for a portion of the year would not be fairly comparable with the ten-month attendance records of other children, it was thought best to present the detailed statistics of absence, not for the entire 10,120 enrolled children, but only

TABLE II

NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN NINE SELECTED SCHOOLS WITH PERIOD OF ENROLMENT*

PERIOD OF ENROLMENT	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	
			Number	Percentage
Ten months(entire school year)	2,524	2,339	4,863	50
Nine months and less than ten.	245	238	483	5
Eight months and less than nine	225	205	430	4
Seven months and less than eight	215	165	380	4
Six months and less than seven	236	190	426	4
Five months and less than six..	307	269	576	6
Four months and less than five	199	158	357	4
Three months and less than four	254	198	452	5
Two months and less than three	286	225	511	5
One month and less than two..	289	270	559	6
Less than one month	401	319	720	7
Total	5,181	4,576	9,757	100
Period of enrolment uncertain	189	174	363	.....
Total enrolment	5,370	4,750	10,120	.....

*A statement regarding the method of compiling data from the school records may be useful. In each school all attendance books for the year studied were collected from the different rooms and deposited in the principal's office during the process of compilation. The attendance record for the entire year was transcribed for each child who had been enrolled for any period whatever. It was found, however, to be a difficult task to get correct results because of the inaccuracy of some of the teachers' records. Different teachers keep their attendance books with varying degrees of accuracy, and some of them are so carelessly kept that it is a most tedious and laborious process to get accurate data from them. For example, on the third consecutive day on which a child is absent, the teacher is supposed to mark him left, designated by a capital "L," and to record his return with a capital "R." In some cases the child is never marked returned, although recorded absences at a later date show that he is again in school. In such a case, it is of course impossible to tell how long the child was absent unless the teacher can remember the date of his return, which is quite unlikely. In some books the writing was so slovenly that it was difficult to distinguish the capital "L" from the "T" for tardy. A small "1" is supposed to indicate that the child has been transferred to another room in the school; after the "1" the number of the room should follow. In certain cases the number was omitted, and no one of the other books gave a further record of the child; it was probable that the teacher used a small "1" when she should have used a capital "L." The teacher should mark absences for each school session, so that if a child is absent the whole day there should be two marks on that date. Frequently in the midst of a long absence, evidently due to illness, there will be a day with only one mark. Or if the system of marking "L" on the third day of absence is followed, such a record as the following will be found: October 1, two absences; October 2, one absence; October 3, left—obviously a failure to record an absence on the second. This statement, therefore, explains why it was necessary to include in the table 363 children whose "period of enrolment was uncertain."

for the 4,863 children who were on the books of these nine schools for the entire school year.

In Table III the number of boys and girls who attended school for ten months are classified according to the number of half-days absent during the year. It is to be regretted that it was not possible to show how far the absences were consecutive and how far irregular, since a long consecutive absence is likely to mean an excusable illness, but the difficulties in the way of the presentation of such further details regarding these absences were insuperable.

TABLE III

ATTENDANCE RECORD OF HALF-DAYS' ABSENCE OF 2,524 BOYS AND 2,339 GIRLS ENROLLED FOR TEN MONTHS IN NINE SELECTED SCHOOLS

HALF-DAYS ABSENT	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
	Number	Per-centage	Number	Per-centage	Number	Per-centage
None	90	4	91	4	181	4
1 and less than 5	226	9	177	8	403	8
5 and less than 10	281	11	243	10	524	11
10 and less than 20	518	20	467	20	985	20
20 and less than 30	424	17	413	18	837	17
30 and less than 40	327	13	266	11	593	12
40 and less than 50	210	8	199	9	409	9
50 and less than 60	121	5	151	7	272	6
60 and less than 70	91	4	71	3	162	3
70 and less than 80	71	3	67	2	138	3
80 half-days or more	165	6	194	8	359	7
Total	2,524	100	2,339	100	4,863	100

In studying this table it should not be forgotten that the 4,863 children whose attendance records are presented here were the most regular in attendance of all the 10,120 children enrolled in these nine schools. There is every reason to believe that attendance records for the remaining 5,257 children who are not enrolled for ten months would show a greater number

of absences since the cases of failure to enrol or changes in enrolment are very frequently due to the same causes as irregularity of attendance after enrolment.

Table III shows that the percentage of absences made by boys and girls corresponds so closely that it is not necessary to discuss them separately. The column of totals shows that 90 boys and 91 girls, 4 per cent of those children who were on the school roll for ten months, did not lose a single half-day of school during the entire year.

TABLE IV

CUMULATIVE NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES SHOWING ABSENCES IN THE EQUIVALENT OF WEEKS

NUMBER	NUMBER OF BOYS AND GIRLS WHO WERE ABSENT THE EQUIVALENT OF								
	8 Weeks or More	7 Weeks or More	6 Weeks or More	5 Weeks or More	4 Weeks or More	3 Weeks or More	2 Weeks or More	1 Week or More	*Less than 1 Week*
Number	359	497	659	931	1,340	1,933	2,770	3,755	*1,108*
Percentage	7	10	13	19	28	40	57	77	*23*

Table IV has been prepared from the column of totals in Table III because the cumulative numbers and percentages give a convenient summary of the number of absences. In this table it appears that 77 per cent, or more than three-fourths of the children who were enrolled for ten months, were absent ten half-days, the equivalent of one week, or more; that more than half of these 4,863 children lost the equivalent of two weeks' schooling or more; that 40 per cent were absent the equivalent of three weeks or more; that 28 per cent were absent the equivalent of four weeks or more and lost at least a full month's work; that 7 per cent lost the equivalent of two months' schooling.

If the other children who were enrolled for shorter periods of time were no more irregular than the 4,863 whose absences

appear in Table III, it would mean that out of the 10,120 boys and girls attending these nine schools, only about 375 were not absent at all and that over 5,700 children were absent more than twenty half-days, and that more than 2,700 had lost a month or more of schooling during the year.

The nine schools, in which attendance records were studied, furnished about 4 per cent of the total enrolment of children in public elementary schools in Chicago. They furnished approximately 5 per cent of the total number of children brought into court during the year as truants or schoolroom incorrigibles. It is, of course, not easy to determine how far the attendance records of these selected schools may be said to furnish a random sample of the records of all the elementary schools in the city and whether or not they may be used as a basis for estimating the extent of non-attendance in the whole city. While attendance in these schools in the poorer districts of the city is perhaps more irregular than in other parts of Chicago, it must not be forgotten that the great majority of children in most of our public schools come from similarly poor and congested neighborhoods. (It may also be recalled again that these percentages of absence are based on the attendance records of the children who were probably most regular in attendance throughout the year.)

The total enrolment in public elementary schools for the entire school year was 257,421. If the attendance records of the children presented in Table IV be accepted as typical of the whole city, then there were in the public elementary schools in Chicago in round numbers 19,000 children who were absent eighty half-days or more, and who lost therefore the equivalent of two months' schooling during the year; 35,000 who lost six weeks or more; 49,300 who lost five weeks or more; 71,000 who lost a month or more; 102,400 children who were absent the equivalent of three weeks or more; and 146,800 children who lost at least a fortnight's schooling.

General tables such as have been presented do not throw much light on the more difficult aspects of the problem of school attendance. One wishes to know the ages and the grades of the absent children, the kind of homes they come from, and above all the excuses given for their absence. Since information with regard to the last two questions could be obtained only by a visit to the homes of absent children, a more detailed investigation of attendance records as well as of the causes of absence was undertaken for two selected schools. Before considering these subjects, however, it seems worth while to examine an important factor in the non-attendance problem that is directly connected with the question of attendance statistics, the system by which children are transferred from one public school to another and back and forth from public to parochial schools.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRANSFER SYSTEM AS A FACTOR IN NON-ATTENDANCE

Quite distinct from the question of irregular attendance of children enrolled on the books of the school and under the supervision of the school authorities is the problem of the children who are not enrolled at all and who have successfully escaped the notice of the teacher, principal, and truant officer. There are at least three groups of such children: (1) the children of newly arrived immigrants who in some cases remain unknown to the school authorities for a considerable period after their arrival; (2) the children in families that have moved to Chicago from the country or from some other city and have found it more convenient, pending discovery, to keep one or more of the children at home than to enter them in school; (3) the children who take transfers from one school and then delay enrolling or fail to enrol at all in the new school. Only this last group will be considered in this chapter.

The transfer problem involves irregularity of attendance as well as a wholesale escape from school, and statistics regarding the amount of time lost through lack of supervision of transferred children should be considered in connection with other statistics of absence. An effort was made to obtain, if possible, the necessary data for making a definite statement regarding the amount of schooling lost through a failure to present transfers promptly.

No statistics on this subject could be obtained, and it was necessary to follow the transferred children from one school to another in order to compare the dates of leaving the old school with the date of enrolment at the new school. The names and addresses of the children to whom transfers had been issued

were obtained from the nine selected elementary schools already discussed. From these schools, the Skinner, Jackson, Holden, Kosciuszko, Thomas, Tennyson, Keith, Moseley, and Jones, representing as has been shown an enrolment of 10,120, or 4 per cent of the public elementary school population, and an average daily attendance of 7,397,[1] the names and the addresses of 770 children to whom transfer slips had been issued were secured. Of these 770, 652 or 85 per cent were apparently transferred to other public schools, and 118 or 15 per cent to various parochial schools. These 770 slips represent only a small proportion of the total number of transfers issued, since the record books, as has been indicated, were in many cases carelessly kept. Moreover, many of the children who were given transfers could not be traced, since several of the schools kept no record either of the new school or of the new address to which the child was going and merely marked the child "transferred."[2] This seemed to be particularly true of transfers from

[1] *Fifty-seventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago*, p. 163.

[2] Of the 770 transfers followed, 563 were issued in one school year, and 207 in the succeeding year. The records of some of the schools cover the whole period of a year and a half, but in other schools the records of transfers were so poorly kept for part of the time as not to be usable. A more detailed statement regarding the method of obtaining information regarding transfers may be of interest. In the first place it was found to be very difficult to obtain the names of transferred children from the school records. The method of issuing transfers is not uniform in different schools, and there is also wide variation in the method of keeping records. In three out of the nine schools duplicate transfer slips were written, one for the child and one to be kept in the school office, and in two of these schools it was possible to obtain from the attendance books or registers additional information which made it possible to follow up the children with greater success. For the six other schools no transfer duplicates were kept. In one of these schools the card catalogue register was used to ascertain the names and the addresses of transferred pupils and in the five remaining schools, no information was available except such as could be found in the registers or attendance books. These, it has already been said, are kept with varying degrees

public to parochial schools. Transfers of this sort have been of frequent occurrence in recent years in Chicago, and if the children who ask for transfers because they are going to parochial schools are not followed up, there is an opportunity for a considerable amount of absence from school between the two enrolments.

After the transfer slips had been obtained, each slip was taken to the new school named, and the record of the child's entrance was examined to ascertain the date of re-enrolment. It was possible, however, to trace only 574 of the 770 children who had "taken transfers," leaving 196 children for whom no information was secured.

It is not probable that all these 196 "lost" children failed to re-enter school; indeed some may have entered promptly the school to which they were transferred; but if so, there was no

of care and accuracy. In one such school all the records were so clear and so apparently accurate that it seemed possible that all transfers were regularly recorded with the name of the school to which the child was to be transferred. Several other schools recorded children as "transferred," sometimes with, sometimes without, the name of the new school; sometimes with a "P.S." to signify parochial school, but making no mention of which one. The school from which the most complete set of duplicate slips was obtained gave clues mainly to public schools. It was said that "children go constantly back and forth" between this school and near-by parochial schools, but out of 138 transfers issued only six were to parochial schools, which seems a small number to represent this "constantly going back and forth" for a period of nearly a year (from January to December). Apparently no special records were kept of transfers or changes to parochial schools, and most of the children going to them were marked with a large L for left, or were simply dropped with a small l after three days' absence without any formality of transfer.

It should be recalled that the authoritative records are not the attendance books and the register, but the teacher's "diary," described as "an undigested mass of details divided by room and day," so that, as an investigator said, "the only way to learn what you want to know, i.e., the date of entering or leaving and the grade, is to know the grade and the day on which the child came or went." With this information the entry might be found.

record of the fact, nor could the child be found by searching every classroom. The principals differed greatly in their willingness to assist in this search. Some inquired in every room, while others would do nothing more than examine the record and try to recall the child's name. In one school to which seventeen children had been transferred only three of them could be found. In a number of cases where the children were traced, they were found in a different school from that to which the transfer had been issued. In some cases, the child had, however, entered the school that was nearest to the new address to which the family had moved. In these cases, of course, the principal had issued a transfer to the wrong school.

There seemed to be a great slackness in the dating of the transfer records. In a considerable number of cases the dates given fell on Saturday or Sunday, and in some cases the child was recorded as continuing to attend for periods of from one to twenty days after the date given as the date of transfer.

Similar slackness was of course found in entering the facts concerning the child's entrance at the new school. That is, a system which is careless about children who go will be equally careless about the children who come. The date recorded as the date of entrance was often the first of the month or the first of the week, sometimes Sunday. Sometimes the recorded date of entering one school antedated the date of leaving the other school. This might be explained by the child's attempting to make the transfer without complying with the formalities. In 51 cases (31 among the 481 children traced to public schools, and 20 among the 93 traced to parochial schools) the record of date of entrance was so obviously inaccurate that no estimate of the time lost by the transfer could be made.

The significance of these facts is of course far greater than appears on the surface. No business concern would tolerate a system of bookkeeping that left important facts to be hunted out of a mass of unclassified material, and that made it impos-

sible to tell where certain of its raw material, its money or its output, had been during a considerable time, and that left from a quarter to two-thirds quite unaccounted for. Nor would a business concern, working with delicate or valuable material, employing many highly paid skilled workers and especially trained foremen, do without stenographers or bookkeepers, relying instead on the reports of the individual workers and an occasional gathering together and classifying of the facts of these reports. The community will surely come to realize that it is as important for it to know what becomes of its children as for manufacturers to know about their raw materials in process of manufacture.

The transfer system is complicated by the fact that children may go not only from one school to another, but from one school system to an entirely different one. The issuing of transfers between public and parochial schools, which are under quite distinct management, creates a serious problem. Many children are said to leave the public for the parochial school without obtaining transfers. Principals said that they gave transfers to parochial schools and got none from them. On the other hand, sisters superior complained that while they gave transfers to public schools the public schools either failed or refused to recognize them in the same way. And there seems to be ground for complaint on both sides. In tracing children who took transfers from public schools, it appeared that the children who went from the public to the parochial school lost a larger number of school days than those who went from one public school to another. That is, it seemed in general to be true that an unduly large proportion of long absences occurred in transfers from public to parochial schools, the children feeling no doubt greater security from detection in passing from one school authority to another.

It is not intended to suggest that no attention is given the subject of transfers by the Department of Compulsory

Education. The published reports of the department have given each year since the school year 1906–7 the number of cases of transferred children investigated by the department, and there has been a very considerable increase in the number of such investigations since our inquiry was begun. The reports of the department show, for example, the number of "transfer cards" investigated as follows: 942 in the school year 1906–7; 343 in 1907–8; 362 in 1908–9; 243 in 1909–10; 478 in 1910–11; 735 in 1911–12; 613 in 1912–13; and 1,325 in 1913–14. Unfortunately the reports of the Board of Education have never published the total number of transfers issued, so the proportionate number investigated cannot be determined.

In spite of the difficulties encountered in tracing transfer slips and in spite of imperfections of the school records, it seemed possible to ascertain the time lost by 485 transferred children between leaving the old school and entering the new school. In Table V is given the number of days lost between the recorded date of transfer from one school and the date of admittance to the other. Where the date of entrance was the same as the date of transfer or the school day next following, the child was counted as having made the transfer without losing any school days. In some cases where the child was traced the records were obviously inaccurate and were therefore discarded.

From this table it appears, as it should, that the largest single groups presented their transfers promptly and entered the second school without loss of time. Out of the 485, however, whose records were obtained, 250 lost one or more days, 135 lost more than three days while 91 lost more than a week, 62 lost more than two weeks, 45 more than three weeks, 35 lost four whole weeks or more. There were, of course, some extreme cases, for the children in the last group lost from six to thirty-two weeks of school. It must not be overlooked that these numbers represent the recorded losses by transfers

from nine schools, representing about 4 per cent of the city's enrolment. This table does not include the lost children who could not be traced at all, nor those whose records were too inaccurate to be used.

TABLE V

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS LOST BY CHILDREN GIVEN TRANSFERS FROM NINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Days Lost	A. Numbers and Percentages		School Days Lost	B. Cumulative Numbers and Percentages	
	Children Transferred			Children Transferred	
	Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage
None	235	48	More than 5 weeks	23	5
1 to 3 days	115	24	More than 4 weeks	35	7
4 to 5 days	44	9	More than 3 weeks	45	9
6 to 10 days	29	6	More than 2 weeks	62	13
11 to 15 days	17	3	More than 1 week	91	19
16 to 20 days	10	2	More than 3 days	135	28
21 to 25 days	12	3	1 day or more	250	52
More than 25 days	23	5	No time	*235*	*48*
Total	485*	100	Total	485*	100

*Out of the total of 770 transfers, 285 are not included in this table because the child's record could not be accurately traced.

The ages of the children transferred showed that the children of compulsory school age were more prompt in reporting when they changed schools than the children under seven. For example, an examination of the slips showed that only 52 per cent of those of compulsory school age lost time while transferring, while 69 per cent of the younger ones failed to make immediate connections. Parents know that the little children are not compelled to attend; and slight considerations of family inconvenience are enough to keep the young children at home. The disturbance of moving and settling even very simple

household goods in a new place would often be more than a sufficient excuse.

No system of recording, however careful, would reveal the real significance of this loss to the children; for, as has been said, there is no limit placed on the number of transfers that can be made in a school year. Change in school does not of course always mean change in the neighborhood. The possibility of leaving the public for the parochial school and again returning or passing on to another is always present. Only by referring to the actual experience of the children can the waste in the child's life and in the use of educational resources be understood. From the following histories some idea can be obtained of the inaccuracy of the records and the wandering on the part of individual children:[1]

Frank D——— was recorded as leaving the A——— School January 3 on transfer to the C——— School. The records in the C——— School put his entrance as April 6, apparently after sixty-four days of school were missed. He stayed six days; his family moved again and, on April 17, left to return to the A——— School. He seems to have arrived there May 2, missing eleven days.

Charles F——— was transferred from the B——— to the K——— School, September 4, the first day of school. There is, however, no record of his entering there until the beginning of the following school year. The question arises whether he entered without being recorded—"slipped in"—, whether he went to some other school and not the one to which the transfer was made out, or whether he was out of school all the year. The second is probably the case, or possibly the first, but we lack the means of proof.

Arthur Z——— left the P——— for the S——— School, January 16; there is no record of his entrance in the S——— until the following September.

An interesting case was that of Mary L———, aged twelve, whom a nurse brought into the office of the R——— School, saying

[1] In these transfer histories, as in other illustrative cases, letters and names are used which conceal the identity of schools and children.

that the girl had been loafing and staying at home, and so she herself decided to bring her in. When Mary's attendance record was looked up, it was found that on September 5 she was living on Jackson Boulevard and had started in at the R——— School in the third grade. On November 4 she took a transfer to the T——— School because she was moving to Ogden Avenue. She did not present this transfer, and while living there did not, according to her own story, attend any school. In January her mother moved again, and Mary re-entered the R——— School, January 15. Her address this time was Monroe Street. On February 7 she left the R——— School and took another vacation, because her mother had moved again, this time to Morgan Street. This vacation lasted until Mary was found at home by the nurse and brought back into the R——— School in March.

Austin C——— was transferred from the A——— to the B——— School, December 21. There is no record there of his entry, but he claims that he was in attendance there and the principal says that he may have slipped in. In the fall of the following year he was once more back in the A——— School.

William R———was recorded in the attendance books of the I——— School as transferred to the J——— School, September 27. He was not recorded in the J——— School. His sister in the I——— School was seen and said that he went to the J——— without a transfer on March 11, and not September 27, as in the attendance books. If this were the case, and, since records in the attendance books were sometimes all the material available, especially when not of the current year, it might be that some other children in a similar way were counted as absent for a more or less considerable period when they had not left school.

William A——— came from the I——— School and entered the S——— School in September. He was there until March 21, when he entered a third school, the K——— School, where he stayed from March 22 to May 11. He then went back to the S——— School where he was registered from June 1 to the end of the school year.

Ethel B——— left the S——— School on transfer to St. ———, a parochial school, on December 5. There was no record of her

enrolment there. She returned to the S——— School February 28. It was learned that the child was often kept at home by her mother to help, and that the case had been referred to the truant officer.

George Y———, eleven years old, is recorded as in the X——— School from the opening of school in September to March 14, when he went to the S——— School, where according to the records he remained from March 15 to March 22. But he was also on the records of the X——— School from March 27 to April 14, when he is marked as leaving to go to the S——— School. On May 22, he left the S——— School without a transfer, and no record was found of his attending either school until September of the following year, when he was again entered at the X——— School. If the S——— School, as is probable, omitted to record an actual change between March 15 and March 22, which is down on the books of the X——— School, we find his attendance record as follows: twenty-six weeks from September to March 14, in the X——— School; change to the S——— School, with no time lost; nine days at the most here; returned to the X——— School, where he stayed not more than fourteen days; a change again to the S——— School; stayed twenty-one days here at most and then left and either was out of school the remaining twenty-four days or changed his program and went to a third school; back in the fall at the X——— School, where he started the previous year.

Joseph Z——— was in the I——— School September 10 to October 17, when he left on transfer to the J——— School. There is no record of his entering there until September of the following year. On September 15, he left the J——— School without a transfer, and the principal did not know where he was.

Agnes M——— left the B——— School for the A——— School in March, but failed to enter the latter school. The investigator heard that she had gone to the E——— district and had not entered any school, although she would not be fourteen until November. At the time of the inquiry she was at work. She was fourteen then but was thought to have begun working illegally while she was under age.

Henry W——— left the H——— School for the A——— School March 15. At the A——— School he is recorded as having entered

from the M——— School the previous October, but there is no record of his arrival from the H——— School, from which he was transferred. The M——— School has no obtainable record of him.

William X——— is recorded as entering the A——— School September 8, but there is no record showing from what school he came. The H——— School records him as leaving there March 15, and the M——— School records him as entering May 15 and leaving June 10, but does not say for what school.

Irene Z——— left the L——— School October 19, entered the K——— School November 7, and left the K——— School January 10. There is no record of where she was going. Stanley Z———, her brother, entered the K——— School October 18, and left according to the records on December 28, although that date falls in the Christmas vacation. He entered a parochial school, the St. ———, on January 19.

These cases are cited as interesting ones for purposes of illustration. Of many children about whom inquiry was made the principal would supplement the records by saying, "He entered on such a day and stayed only a little while," or, "He was here only three weeks." In spite of much persistent effort some children were not traced at all and others had such doubtful or conflicting records as to be of small value except to show the confusion that occurs. For example, a child might be found registered in three schools simultaneously and changing his attendance from one to another to escape the truant officer, or a child might be marked absent on the records of one school while he was in fact attending another. These illustrations serve to show not only the time lost but something of the waste in frequent transfers, with the inevitable changes in teachers and methods. These cases show, too, how imperfectly the records are kept in many schools both as to children arriving and children leaving, since it is impossible in some cases to trace the complete history of a child through one school year in the various schools to which he goes; and they show further how easily under the present transfer system a child may slip wholly out of sight.

Studies made of the records of 9 schools, led our investigators to 90 other schools, giving a view of the records of 99 of the elementary schools of Chicago. There is no reason to suppose that the conditions in the schools that were not visited differed essentially from those prevailing in the schools in which the records were examined, except for the fact that transfers are probably more numerous in the poorer sections of the city where the parents move more frequently.

Transfers should probably be made out in triplicate instead of in duplicate, one slip for the child, one for the principal's file, and one to be mailed to the central offices of the Board of Education. A transfer clerk in the central offices could then mail a reply card to the principal of the new school and if the child had failed to make a report at the new school, investigation could be begun at once. If the ideal of the compulsory education law is that a child is to attend 100 per cent of the school sessions and that every day is too valuable to be lost, then some system should be worked out which will eliminate every possibility of an avoidable absence. There is no intention here of insisting on any particular method of transfer-making or record-keeping; it is the purpose of this chapter rather to insist that some system be devised and enforced with thoroughness and zeal.

Just what the significance of these long absences may be is difficult to estimate. Attention has already been called to the fact that for these children their school life is their only chance for education, for quickening their interest, for preparing them for life in a modern industrial and social democracy. If they have all that the law contemplates for them—seven or nine years of regular school-life—they are still young and untrained persons, poorly equipped to assume the burdens that await them. When they miss even a few days of school, the loss is real; when the loss amounts to weeks, it becomes serious and means not only loss of time and of opportunity which can never

be made good to the child, but irregularity, uncertainty, and impaired efficiency in the schoolroom which the child is allowed to enter and to leave in this casual manner.

Surely a system can be worked out which shall see every child from the old to the new school without loss of time. No transfer should be issued until the teacher knows the child's new address and the new school can be correctly designated in the transfer slip. If the new address cannot be learned from the child, an inquiry might be made by the truant officer at the home before the child has lost any schooling, rather than after absences have occurred.

CHAPTER VIII

A DETAILED STUDY OF THE EXTENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE IN TWO SELECTED SCHOOLS

Statistics relating to non-attendance are of little value unless accompanied by an inquiry into the causes of absence. In such an inquiry non-attendance should be investigated at the source; that is, by a careful inquiry made in the home in order to determine how far the causes may be removable and the resulting absences preventable.

Since it was impossible to make a detailed investigation of non-attendance in all the nine schools in which the attendance records were analyzed, two schools were selected for more intensive study, one on the West Side, predominantly Italian, but with Jewish children, and one on the Northwest Side, predominantly Polish. In each of these two schools after the study of attendance records had been completed, an attempt was made to visit the home of every child who was absent during a period of three weeks. The investigation was made in the West Side school in December and in the Northwest Side school in February, two winter months when the percentage of non-attendance runs high.[1] Table VI, which follows, shows the total enrolment in the two schools during these three weeks and the total number of children of different ages who were absent during this time.

[1] The schools will be referred to as the "West Side" and "North Side" schools. The investigation in the first school was carried on for the three weeks preceding the Christmas holidays (fifteen school days). The investigation in the second school was carried on during three weeks in February. During these three weeks, however, there were two school holidays, February 12 and February 22, so that the investigation actually included only thirteen school days.

TABLE VI

TOTAL ENROLMENT AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS "ABSENT" AND "NOT ABSENT" FROM TWO SELECTED ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS DURING THREE WEEKS' INQUIRY

	Under Seven	Seven to Fourteen	Fourteen and Over	Total
Absent:				
Number	239	1,095	112	1,446
Percentage	52	44	50	45
Not absent:				
Number	217	1,417	112	1,746
Percentage	48	56	50	55
Total	456	2,512	224	3,192

This table shows that out of 3,192 children enrolled in these two schools 1,446, or 45 per cent, were absent at least one half-day during the three weeks, period of investigation.[1] Looking at the division into age groups, it appears that the children of compulsory school age were less irregular in attendance than the children below and above the compulsory age limits; thus only 44 per cent of the children between seven and fourteen years of age were absent in contrast with 52 per cent of the children under seven and 50 per cent of the children fourteen years of age and over.

Although an attempt was made to have all the absent children visited by the investigators, it was unfortunately not possible in either school to devise a system by which this could be accomplished. Home schedules were finally obtained for only 1,158 out of the 1,446 children shown by the teachers' attendance books to have been absent one or more times during the period of the investigation. This failure to visit the home

[1] The percentages of absence for girls and boys were almost precisely the same, and it did not seem worth while therefore to present the data for boys and girls separately.

of each child who was absent was due in part to the fact that the investigators were not able to secure the names and the addresses of all the absent children,[1] but in some cases in which the name and the address were obtained, the investigator in spite of repeated visits failed to find any member of the family at home; in other cases the death or illness of someone in the household made a visit unwise. For example, the prevalence of diphtheria in one neighborhood made it impossible to visit a number of children there.

The tables that have already been given merely show the number of children absent, but not the number of times individual children were absent. The following tables show the extent of non-attendance among the 1,158 children whose absences were investigated by visits to their homes. These tables, however, cover a longer period than the three weeks of home visiting; for the school records were available showing the number of days' absence since the beginning of the session, and the schedule used provided for the child's school attendance from the beginning of the school year down to the last day of the investigation. The table for the West Side school therefore covers four months, from the first Tuesday in September until the Christmas holidays. The table for the North Side school covers a period of six months, from the first Tuesday in September to the last week in February.

Since the investigation of these schools was made during different months, December and February, the number of

[1] An attempt was made to have the different teachers send to the principal's office the names of the children who were absent each session. But although the great majority of teachers faithfully co-operated by sending in their lists regularly, a few teachers in each school were either careless or indifferent at times and failed to send in their reports. The investigators in the office assumed that no children were absent in the rooms from which no lists were sent, but it developed later that this was not always the case.

absences would, of course, be greater in the second school. The table that gives the number of half-days the children were absent is followed by a series of cumulative numbers and percentages that makes it possible to discuss the tables more conveniently. In the West Side school, during sixteen weeks, 6 per cent of the 816 absent children whose homes were visited were absent forty half-days or more; that is, they lost the equivalent of four weeks or more than four weeks of school, which was one-fourth of the time school had been in session; 12 per cent of the children were absent thirty half-days or more, that is, they lost three weeks or more; and 56 per cent lost at least two weeks. In the North Side school, where the records covered twenty-four weeks, 6 per cent of the 342 children visited lost sixty half-days or more, which in this school was likewise equivalent to one-fourth of the time school had been in session; 11 per cent lost the equivalent of five weeks' schooling; 18 per cent lost the equivalent of one month; 29 per cent of the children lost the equivalent of three weeks' schooling; and 50 per cent lost two weeks or more.

The question of whether or not girls are more irregular in attendance than boys is an interesting one. It has already been pointed out that in both schools the percentage of girls who were absent during the period of investigation was approximately the same as the percentage of boys who were absent during the same period, but Table VII shows that the girls were absent a larger number of half-days than were the boys. That is, in the West Side school 21 per cent of the girls and only 16 per cent of the boys were absent twenty-five or more half-days; 33 per cent of the girls and 26 per cent of the boys were absent twenty half-days or more; in the North Side school 24 per cent of the girls and only 14 per cent of the boys were absent forty half-days or more; 34 per cent of the girls and only 25 per cent of the boys were absent thirty half-days and more. The reason

for this greater degree of absence among the girls will be discussed in the chapter dealing with the causes of absence.

TABLE VII

NUMBER OF BOYS AND GIRLS ABSENT SPECIFIED NUMBER OF HALF-DAYS

NUMBER OF HALF-DAYS ABSENT	WEST SIDE SCHOOL (Period of Sixteen Weeks)			NORTH SIDE SCHOOL (Period of Twenty-four Weeks)		
	Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both
1 and less than 5	105	76	181	19	7	26
5 and less than 10	82	95	177	36	21	57
10 and less than 15	46	50	96	32	15	47
15 and less than 20	76	47	123	25	16	41
20 and less than 25	40	48	88	24	16	40
25 and less than 30	21	35	56	22	11	33
30 and less than 40	24	22	46	23	14	37
40 and less than 50	11	9	20	13	12	25
50 and less than 60	5	10	15	5	10	15
60 and over	6	8	14	12	9	21
Total	416	400	816	211	131	342

TABLE VII A

CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES

NUMBER OF HALF-DAYS ABSENT	WEST SIDE SCHOOL (Period of Sixteen Weeks)			NORTH SIDE SCHOOL (Period of Twenty-four Weeks)		
	Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both
60 or more	1	2	2	6	7	6
50 or more	3	5	4	8	15	11
40 or more	5	7	6	14	24	18
30 or more	11	12	12	25	34	29
25 or more	16	21	18	36	43	38
20 or more	26	33	29	47	55	50
15 or more	44	45	44	59	67	62
10 or more	55	57	56	74	79	76
5 or more	75	81	78	91	95	92
Less than 5	*25*	*19*	*22*	*9*	*5*	*8*

It is, of course, important to know whether, when a child was absent several half-days, the absences were consecutive or irregular.[1] The long absence of several consecutive half-days is usually due to illness, whereas the irregular absences—the occasional half-day or day of non-attendance—are much more likely to be unnecessary, founded on some trivial excuse.

[1] Since, in general, irregularity is determined by the number of different periods the child is absent, it was decided to call those absences that occurred at three or more different times "irregular," and those that occurred at only one or two different periods "consecutive." This gave a definite basis of classification, but it was not entirely free from objections. The absences of some children were called consecutive merely because they were absent less than three times; some were called irregular that may have been a series of consecutive absences, that is, some of the children who were absent at three different periods may have been absent on each occasion for a number of consecutive days, but, although any one absence would have been properly called "consecutive," the series of absences falls correctly into the "irregular" class. In general, it is believed that the method of classification adopted tends to underestimate the factor of irregularity, The following table presents the results of a classification on this basis.

IRREGULARITY OF ABSENCES OF CHILDREN IN TWO SELECTED SCHOOLS

Absences	West Side School (Period of 16 Weeks)		North Side School (Period of 24 Weeks)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Consecutive..	212	26	27	8
Irregular.....	604	74	315	92
Total.....	816	100	342	100

This table shows that, even with a very liberal standard of what may be called consecutive absences, a very small proportion belong in this group. In one school 74 per cent of the children and in the other 92 per cent of the children were absent at irregular intervals. Irregularity according to the method of classification adopted would increase with the period for which the statistics were gathered and is naturally greater in the school from which records were obtained for six months than in the school from which only four months' records were obtained.

It is, however, difficult to classify the absences of a large number of children on this basis because the same child may belong in both the irregular and consecutive groups; that is, he may be absent for two weeks on account of illness and he may be absent one half-day each week for trivial reasons during the rest of the term. In general, however, it seemed to be true that the absences of most of the children were not the consecutive absences due to illness, but the irregular absences which indicate casual and unnecessary non-attendance.

A few other general questions relating to these non-attending or absent children should be answered before the causes of non-attendance are discussed. No study of truancy, non-attendance and the causes of absences can be of value without a clear understanding of family and neighborhood conditions. The first of the two schools studied is located in the heart of the West Side of Chicago in a ward that contained 91 people per acre at a time when the average population in the city as a whole was 20 people per acre; the second was in an almost equally crowded neighborhood with 82 people per acre. This overcrowding is, however, to be found in all the river wards, the wards of the lower West Side, lower North Side, and the Southwest Side in which the majority of the children of Chicago live.[1]

[1] See an article, "The Housing Problem in Chicago," No. IV, by E. Abbott and S. P. Breckinridge, in the *American Journal of Sociology*, XVII, 2 ff., for the following data regarding the overcrowding in different Chicago wards. The federal census population statistics for 1910 "showed that in the city as a whole the average population per acre was 19.7. The Ninth and Tenth wards, which include the 'Ghetto' and the poor district about the lumber yards and canals, have a density of 70 and 80.8 per acre; the Nineteenth Ward, the crowded immigrant section in which Hull-House is situated, has 90.7 per acre; the Seventeenth Ward, a similarly poor and crowded tenement-house district, has a density of 97.4; and the Sixteenth Ward, a Polish neighborhood, has a population averaging 81.5 per acre. It appears that the six most densely populated wards which have more than 70 people per acre are all on the West Side. Altogether in eighteen wards in different parts of the city the average number of people was forty or more per acre."

The two school neighborhoods studied were both immigrant neighborhoods, the one predominantly Italian and the other Polish. A very considerable number of children visited had themselves been born abroad, and the parents belonged almost entirely to the immigrant group. In Table VIII the place of birth of the head of the family is given—that of the father, if alive, and of the mother, if the father was dead.

TABLE VIII

NATIVITY OF PARENTS OF NON-ATTENDING CHILDREN

A. West Side School

Place of Birth	Number	Percentage
Italy	510	63
Russia	144	18
Germany	27	3
Ireland	27	3
Other foreign countries	48	6
United States	51	7
Total*	807	100

B. North Side School

Place of Birth	Number	Percentage
Poland	189	61
Germany	45	14
Austria-Hungary	25	8
Russia	25	8
Other foreign countries	5	2
United States	21	7
Total*	310	100

*Nine cases on the West side and thirty-two on the North Side are omitted from the total because the place of birth of the parents was not given.

The table shows that both in the West Side and in the North Side school only 7 per cent of the parents of the

non-attending children were born in this country. The West Side school neighborhood is a homogeneous one with 63 per cent of the parents born in Italy; in the North Side district 61 per cent of the parents were Polish, and a very considerable number came from Russia and from the Slavic provinces of Austria.

In the second of these neighborhoods so large a proportion were Polish that it seemed best to designate Poland as if it were still a political unit. The term Poland in the table, therefore, covers all those who were born in Russian Poland, German Poland or Austrian Poland.

From whatever country they come, the parents of these children do not immediately become Americanized. They continue to be Italian or Polish. The language of the home is Italian or Polish,[1] and it is not English but these other languages that one hears spoken in the shops and on the streets of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Living in a foreign colony, working with gangs of men of their own nationality, finding it easy to depend on the children as interpreters in emergencies, the parents find it extremely difficult to learn English and believe it to be quite unnecessary. Thus in the great majority of cases English is not spoken in

[1] The following table shows that English was the language spoken in less than one-fourth of the homes of the children whose absences were investigated.

Among the foreign languages were, of course, Polish, Italian, Yiddish, Bohemian, Slovak, and German.

Language of Home	Number	Percentage
Foreign	767	70
English	255	23
Both foreign and English	79	7
Total*	1,101	100

*In 57 cases the language of the home was not given.

the home because the parents, especially the mothers, have never learned to speak it with ease, if at all.[1]

The importance of this factor in the compulsory education situation cannot be overestimated. Coming from the most impoverished countries of Europe, where free education is unknown, the parents do not easily understand that school attendance is not only free but compulsory and that "compulsory attendance" means "regular attendance." It is easy for these parents to make sacrifices for the children to go to school, but not easy to grasp all at once the American standard of education, which means regular attendance for at least seven years, no matter how soon the elementary arts of reading and writing may be acquired.

In an attempt to understand the social background from which these non-attending children come, two other questions of importance arise; the first is the question of poverty in the home, and the second the question of how far non-attendance is caused by the fact that the mothers of these children are widows obliged to support their children by working away from home. In order to formulate some definite statement regarding the economic status of these families, they have been classified into four economic groups, which may be described as very poor, poor, comfortable, and very comfortable. No

[1] The following table shows the number and percentage of parents who were able to speak English.

Ability to Speak English	Father		Mother	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Able to speak English	592	64	472	45
Not able	334	36	587	55
Total*	926	100	1,059	100

*In the case of 232 fathers and 99 mothers there was no report as to ability to speak English.

families that could be called wealthy were found among the absent children in either of these neighborhoods.

The investigators who visited the homes could not in a single visit obtain sufficiently accurate information regarding the earnings of the father or of others in the family to justify any attempt to classify these families on the basis of income. The dividing lines, then, between the economic groups were not determined by family earnings but by the standard of living, that is, by facts indicating the kind of house and the number of rooms in which the family lived, the condition of the home as to furnishings and cleanliness, the kind of work done by the father, and particularly by the fact of whether or not the mother had been obliged to become a supplementary wage-earner. That is, the information in the investigator's schedule did make it possible to say whether or not the family were living under conditions of poverty. We are concerned therefore in this classification merely with the home circumstances, and a family living in wretched conditions in a miserable home was called "poor" or "very poor" even if the wife said that her husband was at work at fairly good wages. The wages may have been saved or dissipated but, in either case, the condition of the home was for the time not profiting by the higher income.[1]

In general, the families called "very poor" were not normally self-sustaining families, and many of them were supported in part by some charitable organization. The families deserted by the father and those in which the father was dead or was an invalid were in this class. In other cases the family was "very poor" because the father was shiftless or drunken and kept the family impoverished through his neglect. On the other hand,

[1] In an earlier study of the delinquent wards of the Juvenile Court, when we were confronted by a similar problem of classification, a similar method was used. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter, "The Poor Child: The Problem of Poverty," in *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, by S. P. Breckinridge and E. Abbott.

the families called "poor" were normally self-sustaining; but the father, although able to keep up the home without charity and without making the wife and mother go outside of the home to become a wage-earner, did so with great difficulty. The men in the families classified as poor were for the most part unskilled laborers handicapped by their inability to speak English and subject to the largest hazards of unemployment. These families live under great pressure, and to keep the children supplied with proper shoes and clothing for school necessitates a constant struggle. The families classified as "comfortable" are those of artisans, tailors, or small shopkeepers who live in cheerful little homes and who are well above any fear of want. In the neighborhood of the West Side school there were in addition a few families who, while not at all wealthy, were considerably above the general standard of living in the neighborhood. These were liquor-dealers, proprietors of good stores in the neighborhood and, in a few cases, manufacturers. In general, their neighbors spoke of them as "fine" or "rich," and it seemed worth while to place them in a separate class, which might best be described as "very comfortable." One of these families, for example, kept a servant. Table IX shows the results of an attempted classi-

TABLE IX

ECONOMIC STATUS OF FAMILIES OF NON-ATTENDING CHILDREN

Economic Group	Number	Percentage
Very poor	153	14
Poor	724	64
Comfortable	241	21
Very comfortable	11	1
Total*	1,129	100

*In the case of 29 families the information was not sufficient to justify their classification into economic groups.

fication on the basis of economic status as indicated by the conditions of the home.

This table shows that 78 per cent of the families visited were poor or very poor; that 21 per cent were in fairly comfortable circumstances, while a very few families (1 per cent) could be called very comfortable.

Passing on to the question of how many of these children belonged to widowed or deserted mothers, Table X shows that the great majority of children belong to normal family groups.

TABLE X

PARENTAL STATUS OF NON-ATTENDING CHILDREN

Children Having—	Number	Percentage
Both parents living	1,044	90
Father only	41	4
Mother only	68	6
Neither parent	5	..*
Total	1,158	100

*Percentage less than 1 per cent

This table indicates that 4 per cent of these children are motherless, 6 per cent come from fatherless families, and 90 per cent come from families in which both parents are living.

It is hardly necessary to point out that regular attendance at school is difficult for the children who are fatherless or motherless. In the poor home, the widowed mother who has to become a wage-earner is often obliged to leave her children to get dressed and to prepare their own breakfast and to be themselves responsible for getting to school on time. For the children who are actually motherless, there is the same difficulty. If one pictures the miserable cold rooms, the difficulties of dressing in confusion and disorder, the lack of care and supervision, it is not strange that many of these children are irregular at school. In this connection it should not be overlooked that

in these neighborhoods large families are the rule, and, to the inconveniences which may be due to poverty must be added the difficulties due to the pressure of a large number of children in the small, uncomfortable rooms. By way of summary, then, it may be said that there is a great deal of irregular or "casual" school attendance in these poor and crowded neighborhoods. In the next chapter an attempt will be made to present the immediate causes of non-attendance. The evil of irregular attendance can be cured only after it is understood; and it can be understood only by studying it at the source, that is, in the homes which are so largely responsible for it.

CHAPTER IX

NON-ATTENDANCE AT THE SOURCE

A study of the causes of absence shows that truancy and non-attendance are closely related to the neighborhood conditions which have already been described. In these immigrant neighborhoods where there are crowded conditions of living, where the families are very poor, and it is a perpetual struggle to give the children enough to eat and to wear, there is inevitably a great waste of the children's schooling that does not occur in more prosperous sections of the city. Sickness occurs among the children that could be avoided if better care were possible; sickness of others in the home, and other family exigencies due to poverty impose a heavy burden of care upon the children, which is met by sacrificing school attendance. Table XI shows the reasons given in the home either by the mother or the guardian of the child for the non-attendance of the 1,158 absent boys and girls visited by the investigators.

The various excuses given have been grouped under three heads: (1) absences caused by sickness and family emergencies, which explain the majority of the absences of the whole number of non-attending children; (2) absences which could be avoided by a little better care and a little more trouble on the part of the mother—keeping the children at home to run errands, to help with the housework, and in general to meet the convenience of the mother; (3) absences due to truancy, that is, cases in which the mother had sent the child to school and did not know that he had gone elsewhere.

The great majority of the children absent on account of sickness seemed to have only very trivial indispositions, and a very small number of children were found in bed. In a con-

siderable number of cases where the mother said that the child was sick, the investigator felt that the absence was due rather to carelessness or indifference; for example, the child had overslept in the morning or the mother had not got the necessary clean clothes ready.

TABLE XI

REASONS GIVEN FOR THE NON-ATTENDANCE OF 1,158 BOYS AND GIRLS WHOSE SCHOOL ABSENCES WERE INVESTIGATED

REASONS GIVEN FOR ABSENCE	BOYS		GIRLS		BOTH	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Sickness and family emergencies:						
Sickness of child	280	46	268	51	548	48
Sickness of others	34	6	47	9	81	7
Birth, death, wedding, etc.	17	3	16	3	33	3
Church attendance	13	2	8	2	21	2
Other excuses:						
Work at home	56	9	75	14	131	12
Lack of shoes or clothes	46	8	34	7	80	7
Errands and interpreting	31	5	11	2	42	4
Having company or visiting	13	2	10	2	23	2
Working or looking for work	11	2	1	*	12	1
"Tardy and so stayed at home"	23	4	21	4	44	4
Excused by teachers	4	*	2	*	6	*
Inclement weather	6	1	5	1	11	1
Various trivial excuses	29	5	16	3	45	4
Truancy:						
Mother thought child at school	44	7	8	2	52	5
Total†	607	100	522	100	1,129	100

*Less than 1 per cent.

†In 29 cases, 20 boys and 9 girls, no reason was given for the absence.

In many cases the child was ill because his physical needs had not been properly looked after, because the mother was overworked or ignorant or perhaps very poor, and the child had therefore not been taken to a dentist or had his tonsils

looked after or been given some other necessary preventive treatment. Sometimes the child's undernourished condition or lack of warm clothing and of shoes that would keep the feet dry had made him susceptible to colds and other illnesses. The fact that approximately one-fifth of all the children enrolled should within three weeks be absent because of sickness shows an urgent need for school nurses and thorough medical inspection. It may be noted too that the visits made by a school nurse who is also a social worker not only protect the child from unnecessary absences due to preventive illnesses, but such visits often afford an excellent opportunity for general family service, instruction in better methods of housekeeping, better care of all the children, as well as help in the process of Americanizing many homes.

One little boy whose absence was investigated had been out of school sixty-two half-days during the twenty-four school weeks. He was found at home sick, lying on the floor by the stove. His mother was away working, and there was no one to look after this child or the three smaller children who were at home. Another case needing the care of a school nurse was that of a little girl whose mother was keeping her at home because she could not pay $25 to have her tonsils out. Her doctor had said that it would cost that much, and no one had told her of a free dispensary which was not difficult to reach. Another little girl was kept at home to look after the children while her mother took the ten-year-old brother, who had been excluded from school, to the doctor for treatment.

With the children who are sick, must be classed the children who are excluded because of a disease that is contagious, although it may not incapacitate them. Such are the children with scabies and ringworm, the deadly trachoma, or "blight," and the less serious cases of unclean heads. These diseases are generally due to filth and neglect, and the children afflicted with them usually come from homes of the lowest grade.

Unless treatment is vigorously pushed, the ignorant or indifferent mother acquiesces only too readily in the exclusion of the children from school and makes little or no effort to get them in condition to return. One eleven-year-old Polish boy who was visited by an investigator in February had been excluded because of scabies the first week in September. He re-entered school in January, but was found to be still suffering from the disease. He had been told by the nurse that he must go regularly to the dispensary, but his mother had made no effort to have him go. As a result he had lost a whole term at school and had every prospect of losing another. In this case the boy belonged to a very low-grade family living in the rear of a saloon. His mother was a drinking woman, and the boy's sister had been in the Juvenile Court as a delinquent. The school record showed that the twelve-year-old boy in the family had also lost a great deal of time at school—forty-eight half-days during the twelve weeks since he had been transferred from a parochial school—but the mother strongly maintained that he was still in the parochial school and that the public school "had nothing to do with him."

The Visiting Nurses Association, the Department of Compulsory Education, the United Charities, and the Juvenile Court had all worked with this family without success. The United Charities had finally asked to have the children removed from the home, but the Juvenile Court had refused to grant the petition.

Inquiries made at the United Charities offices revealed the fact that it was not difficult to find other similar cases of children wholly excluded from school. One district office of the Charities reported, for example, the following interesting case. In a family in which the father was suffering from tuberculosis there were five children; the eldest, a little girl ten years old, had tubercular glands and trachoma; a little girl of seven had tubercular glands; a younger child in the family had trouble

with his eyes; and the two other children were also tubercular. The family was originally reported to the Charities by a competent school nurse because the father was ill, but the report was made in January, a month when relief societies are very busy, and, although the office visitor gave attention to the man, got him to a tuberculosis sanitarium, and gave assistance to the family in his absence, it was not until the following summer that the physical condition of the other members of the family was looked into. At that time when the woman asked that the children be given a country holiday, a physical examination was necessary, and it was then learned for the first time that Mrs. S——— and some of the children had trachoma and could not therefore be sent to the country. According to the case record, however, it was not until the following November that an effort was made to secure treatment for any of the children.

In January of the next year a nurse again reported the family to the district office and called attention to the fact that the children in the family had trachoma. It was not until March, however, when all the children seemed to be infected with this terrible disease that the society made any persistent efforts to see that the children had proper treatment. Even then it was June, fully a year and a half after the first report, before the children were taken to the Eye and Ear Hospital and Dispensary. At that time the doctor at the hospital thought that the little girls should be isolated, but the mother refused to allow them to be placed in the hospital, and there ensued a long struggle for proper care and treatment. The officers of the Health Department, the Juvenile Court, and the Municipal Court were evidently appealed to in the hope that the mother could be coerced into permitting the necessary care and medical treatment for the children. As a result finally of semi-weekly visits by a visiting nurse, the district office was notified in the following February that the mother

was ready to take up the matter of getting a certificate that would entitle the children to go to school. This, however, was never followed up. On March 4, a United Charities visitor who went to the home reported, "Children not in school yet." On March 12, when the visitor was there again, she found that the children were still out of school. On May 10 the visitor reported that the children again had very sore eyes, that the mother was out, and that Mamie, the eldest child, was taking care of the house and the children. On June 10 the record shows that the nurse was once more coming twice a week to dress the children's eyes. At this time the family was turned over to the Pension Department of the Juvenile Court, and on October 8 it was reported that the children's eyes were much better and that the two little girls were in school. A report from the school on December 4 of the same year was as follows: "Teachers of both girls say that they are frequently absent. They were both out of school a whole day recently to say good-bye to relatives leaving for Italy. They are both very slow in their work and large for their grades. Mamie (now twelve years old) is in the third grade. Both children are well behaved." They had both lost two years and a half of schooling.

Family emergencies of all sorts, too, fall heavily upon the children in these poor homes, and many of them are absent a considerable number of days every year because of the illness of some other member of the family. Cases of chronic illness are the most serious, and a child is sometimes made to lose an entire year's schooling because there is no one else to care for a sick mother or father during a long illness. For example, two little Polish boys, Stanley, aged twelve, and Matthew, aged ten, were being kept at home alternately to care for a mother who was ill with tuberculosis. The family had never had either a doctor or a nurse, although the father was a skilled workman earning good wages and two older sisters were both working. The home was terribly neglected, and the little boys

were delicate and anemic. In this case it would probably have been wise for one of the sisters to give up working and take care of the mother and the home. It was surely no kindness to the family to allow them to deprive the two little boys of education and health and at the same time to allow the home to be shockingly neglected.

A little Polish girl, ten years old and in the second grade, who had been absent fifty-six half-days within six months, was found at home in a rear basement apartment of two rooms, taking care of her mother, who was lying on a mattress in the kitchen. The mother explained that the visiting nurse and the county doctor both came to see her and a policeman had brought a basket. It was learned that the family had been deserted by the father, and the mother was usually able to support herself and the child by washing; but when she was ill she was compelled to keep the child at home to care for her. The child had already been out of school five weeks. The attention of the United Charities was called to this home in the hope that the mother could be persuaded to go to a hospital until she was entirely well again, and that the child might be properly provided for until the mother's return.

In a much larger number of cases, however, the children were kept at home to relieve a sudden pressure caused by an unexpected illness. One boy was kept to watch fires for a sick father while his mother "got a day's work"; another had stayed at home because his sister's baby was in convulsions and his mother had not been able to get him ready to go to school; John was staying at home because his mother had gone to see a doctor and wanted him to look after the children, who did not like to go to the day nursery; Bruno, aged twelve, was found at home helping his mother wash, but he explained that he had really stayed out to go "to tell the boss" that his father was sick; Genevieve, aged twelve, who had been absent fourteen half-days and tardy twice during the month when the

investigator called, was found alternately tending the shop and taking care of three younger children and of a sick mother, although her father was well able to hire someone to come in to help care for the family while the little girl was at school.

A few children, 3 per cent of the whole number, were absent because of a death in the family, or, in a small number of especially pathetic cases, because of the birth of a new baby, at which the little girl was obliged to officiate as midwife and nurse. In one family Helen, aged eleven, was not only taking care of her sick mother and of the new baby who had arrived the night before, but of six other children younger than herself. The mother explained that the child had had no sleep the night before and was not fit to go to school in any case. The father, who was at home, was a chronic invalid, and the mother begged to be allowed to keep the child at home for a week or two because she needed her "to go to the Charities" and to do errands. Later when she was told that a visiting nurse would help with the baby and that "the Charities" had promised to send someone to help while the little girl was away, she was glad to have the child go back to school. In another family, a little girl, not quite eight years old, was being kept at home to help her mother in a similar emergency. And in still another case, Mary reported that she was taking care of the children while her mother was helping a neighbor woman who was "getting a baby"; had the mother made an effort, another neighbor could undoubtedly have been found who would have helped with the children and prevented the interruption of Mary's schooling.

No one wishes to judge these poor people for yielding to the hard pressure of circumstances, but it is clearly wrong that in such cases the heaviest costs should be paid by the child, when a resourceful visitor could suggest better ways of tiding over the emergency than depriving the child of his only chance of education and frequently at the same time overtaxing his physical strength. Many of the parents are newly arrived

immigrants, helpless in other ways, as well as poor, and it is no kindness to them to acquiesce in a hand-to-mouth plan which means sacrificing the child's future, when it is possible to devise better methods of meeting the immediate need by calling in a visiting nurse or by soliciting the friendly assistance of a kindly neighbor.

Because of the many hardships of life encountered by these poor families, one is tempted to excuse the cases of absence due to wedding festivities. A wedding is, in these neighborhoods, a great family festival in which children are expected to share. Nevertheless, it seemed hard that one more reason for irregular attendance should be added to those already existing. The absence of a little girl who was taking care of the baby while her mother was getting the older sister ready to be married, and absence of a little boy who had not been able to get up in time to go to school because he had been "helping at a wedding" until four o'clock in the morning were examples of children whose schooling suffered as a result of the family festivity.

No study of the causes of non-attendance in the immigrant sections of the city can fail to emphasize the fact that poverty is only too frequently the real excuse for non-attendance. In many cases where the father is a decent, industrious workman in regular work, but with a large family and small wages, it is impossible in the winter to "get ahead." The week's earnings barely provide for the week's regular expenses of rent, fuel, and food, and there is never any leeway, never, for example, any ready savings for the next pair of shoes. It is astonishing how important the shoe problem is as a factor in non-attendance. Too often, if shoes go to pieces during the week, new ones cannot be bought before the next pay day and the child must stay at home until then. And the new shoes are not bought until the old ones are literally in pieces. Roman, aged thirteen, and only in the fourth grade, was found at home wearing old arctics of his father. His mother explained that his father and

the older boys had just "got jobs" and would get their first "pays" next week, when Roman would have shoes and be returned to school. In the case of another little boy found patiently sitting shoeless by the fire, it was explained that "Father gets paid this evening and will buy shoes for Stanley on the way home." . Edward, who was also found at home, had worn his old shoes until they had made blisters on his feet, and today they had no money, and so he had to wait until tomorrow, when his father would "get him shoes out of his pay and send him back to school." Thomas was not at home because he had stayed out of school to get his shoes mended, and his mother explained that as he sold papers after school and in the evening, there was no other time for the mending to be done. In another family Mary was at home because she had torn her shoe the night before, and since she had no other her mother had to take it out to be mended before she could go out again.

In addition to the families that are really independent and able to provide shoes at least on pay day, there are many cases in which the family cannot provide shoes at all because there is no pay day in sight, and help must be asked of public or private charity before the child can return to school. John, who was nearly twelve years old and in the second grade and who had been absent forty half-days irregularly in six months, was found at home in a room that contained no furniture except a cracked stove and two old chairs; the boy explained that his mother was out washing and that his father sometimes "worked on boats," that the county agent was coming to see whether they needed help or not and he had to be home to explain or interpret, for he was the only English-speaking member of the family; moreover his shoes were all gone so that he could not go back to school anyway. He showed a touching confidence that he would get shoes from the county agent the first thing the next morning, and would come late to school.

Another eleven-year-old boy, from the first grade, who was found at home, complained that he needed shoes and clothes and that he also had to "carry pants" and run errands while his mother sewed. The father was dead, and the family of six were living in a small three-room basement apartment; the mother was a home finisher, "sewing pants" in a dark room lighted by a small kerosene lamp. In the same room was a little girl of nine, barefooted, who had been out of school over three months and who not only had no shoes or stockings but who had only a thin summer dress. The woman said that she would like to have the children in school but that she could not earn enough to buy clothes or shoes. Later, however, when proper clothing had been furnished, she did not send them to school, but insisted that Michael had to "carry" from the tailor's. She was so absorbed in getting enough money to pay the rent and to buy food that school seemed unimportant in contrast.

This family had never been helped by a private charitable organization but had had county outdoor relief. The visitor from the county agent's office seemed, however, to have made no effort to improve the deplorable conditions in the home or to get the children to school. Two other cases illustrated the same indifference toward the children's school attendance on the part of the public relief agency. Joseph, nearly thirteen and in the fifth grade, was found at home, waiting for coal to be delivered. His mother showed a county coal ticket and explained that the county coal was always left on the sidewalk, and unless she kept Joseph at home to carry it in, it would be all gone. In another household, Frank, aged ten and in the third grade, who had been absent for two days, was found at home scrubbing the floor. His mother anxiously explained that the county agent had promised to send coal and Frank would have to stay at home until it came because there was no one else to carry it up. She had had a hemorrhage recently in a tailor shop and was afraid to lift anything heavy.

It may, of course, be suggested that the "widow's pension" law[1] should prevent such hardships, but the fact must not be overlooked that what is really needed is some machinery for putting such families in touch with agencies that are available. That is, what seems to be most needed is a mobilization of the social resources which are waiting to serve in just such cases of need.

There are a few families in which the pressure in the home is so great that the mother finds herself unable to resist the temptation to keep the children at home quite regularly for a day or a half-day's help. But in the majority of such cases, the work could be rearranged so that the child's schooling need not be sacrificed. To help these poor people to make a hard life a little easier by depriving their children of the few educational opportunities open to them is merely prolonging their misery; for if the child loses his schooling, conditions in the home will not be improved when he, in his turn, becomes an incompetent man. In one home, where the man was out of work and was reported to be unwilling to work, the mother went out to wash and kept three little girls alternately out of school to "keep the home." In this case, the woman was defiant and said that she had a right to keep her children home while she was earning something for them to eat and to wear. In another home Mary, aged eleven and a half and only in the second grade, was being kept at home regularly one day a week. The father worked nights, and the mother said that she "had to have" Mary at home when she washed so that the baby could be kept quiet and the father given a chance to sleep. Her washing was very small and could have been done after school or even on Saturday without serious inconvenience, but so long as she was allowed to do so, she preferred the easier way of keeping Mary out of school. A little thirteen-year-old girl in another family had been kept at home every Tuesday or Wednesday,

[1] Technically called in Illinois the "Funds to Parents" law, enacted June, 1911.

sometimes both days, since she had been in the school. The mother insisted that she could not pay anyone to help wash although the father and three older children all had steady work.

It is not always the little girl who is kept at home to help. Charles, who lacked one month of being fourteen and who was only in the third grade, had been absent twenty-nine of the forty school days since he left the parochial and entered the public school. The mother said that she was not able to do heavy work and "needed a child home, off and on." The father and the two older children were working, and the home was comfortable and well furnished, with rugs and a piano; but the mother insisted that they had no money to spare and counted off the days on the calendar until the boy would be fourteen and could be put to work. Surely it is the duty of the state to protect boys like Charles, and not to let them be deprived of what is really their American birthright because the parents are too ignorant to appreciate its value.

A little German boy who had been very irregular in attendance was found selling papers on the street. His mother was surprised to learn that he "must always go to school when there was school," as she expressed it. She said that she always sent him to school in the mornings, but that he sometimes got papers to sell in the afternoon, an arrangement which she thought indicated an altogether admirable thrift.

In another home a little twelve-year-old girl was found at home scrubbing the floor and crying; she said at first that her mother kept her from school because she had no dress to wear. When she was told that the dress she had on was quite good enough, it was discovered that she was really at home to take care of a little brother while her mother went on an errand. Another little girl had been absent thirty-four separate half-days in six months, and the constant excuse was that she had to go to her aunt's to help her take care of the children.

In a few cases the mother complained that she had no time to get the children clean enough to go to school. One woman, the mother of eight children, said that Mike had no clean blouse, and added forcibly, and no doubt with much truth, that when she had to go out and wash for other people she had no time to wash for her own children. Joseph, who had been absent forty-nine half-days in six months, said that he had no clean clothes, a statement of obvious fact. His mother was away at a neighbor's, but he said she would wash his sweater some time during the day and clean him up so that he could go to school the next day. A little girl in the same neighborhood, who was absent, had a similar excuse. Her dress had to be washed, she said, and she had only one. The possibility of washing a dress at night does not occur to these mothers so long as they have the more convenient alternative of keeping the child at home the next day. If the compulsory education law were rigidly enforced, however, other ways would be devised of meeting the numerous emergencies that under present conditions seem to necessitate keeping the child out of school.

Many of the excuses now given are extremely trivial. One boy, aged thirteen, whose father kept a clothing store, was allowed to stay at home to see new windows put up in front of their shop; another boy was found hauling a clock across the street and explained that he had to help a neighbor move; another was staying at home to "help move" an aunt; still another was packing the few family belongings that they might be ready to move later when his mother came home; another boy who was found at home said that he was staying out to help care for a sick horse. More serious were the number of absences caused by the mother's morbid curiosity, which led her to go to the services for some young Polish men who had been hanged for murder. Several children were found at home that day taking care of the smaller children while the mother went to the funerals.

A number of absences were due wholly to carelessness. Chester was found at home scrubbing the floor, and explained that he had overslept; Sam, who was found studying in his father's store, was very much ashamed to be caught and explained that he had fallen asleep at his sister's the night before and did not get back in the morning in time for school; Frank claimed that he was staying home to take care of the three small children while his mother worked in the saloon, but the mother said that he did not need to look after the children, and that he was out of school because he had slept too late. One mother said that she hated to have Nathan, aged thirteen, get up so early when he stayed up so late, but seemed not to have thought of the alternative of getting him to bed earlier. One woman, thoroughly defiant, would give no excuse except to say, "When he has to stay home, he has to."

In one very prosperous family in which there were four children at work, a little thirteen-year-old boy, who was in the fifth grade had been kept at home on Monday and Tuesday of nine successive weeks to help with the washing. When the compulsory education law was carefully explained to the mother, she agreed with the investigator that she might hire someone to help wash. When it was suggested that they were sufficiently prosperous to keep the boy in school until he graduated from the eighth grade, she seemed greatly surprised to know that children were allowed to stay in school after they were fourteen; her other children, she said, had all left the parochial school when they were confirmed, and she had never understood that children could go to school when they were old enough to work. In another sufficiently well-to-do family the washerwoman had failed to appear, and instead of postponing the washing the little thirteen-year-old boy was kept at home to do it.

In many cases the child is kept at home because it is convenient to have an interpreter. For example, Tony, aged

twelve, was staying at home to interpret when the plumber arrived; Stanley, aged thirteen, had to take his mother to court and to act as a witness; John explained that his father's "trial" was on and he had to see that his mother, who spoke no English, got safely to court and back again; Frank, aged thirteen, had to go with his aunt and interpret for her until she "got a job"; Peter, aged twelve, who was out helping his mother hunt rooms, explained the next day that she did not like to go alone because she could not speak English, and since the older children were at work he was the only one who could go with her; that is, it was more convenient to keep Peter at home than to hunt rooms in the evenings or on Saturday.

While visiting the homes of more than 1,100 absent children, it was inevitable that some should be found living in such unwholesome and degraded homes that regular school attendance could scarcely be expected. It was discovered, for example, that one little boy who had been absent thirty-nine half-days in less than six months was being sent to pick up coal near the tracks, although the family were reputed to be prosperous and were buying their house. In spite of their good income, the shiftlessness of the mother had demoralized the home; she seemed to be a very lazy woman who did not usually get up until noon; when the investigator called, the kitchen was full of men who were sitting about while the mother was still in bed in the same room.

Another little boy in the same neighborhood had not entered school until the second week in October and had been absent fifty-seven half-days in the five months following. The visitor found the home, the three children, and the mother all in a filthy condition; the little boy claimed that he had no clean waist and that his earlier absences had been due to a lack of shoes; it was discovered, however, that he had been "bumming around the nickel shows on the avenue," and that he was suspected of stealing. One of the other children at home was

a little girl, eleven years old, who was supposed to be attending a parochial school, but who claimed, no doubt erroneously, that the Sisters let her stay at home to help her mother.

One eleven-year-old boy absent from the third grade was found on the street selling "extras." This boy was one of six children belonging to a family well known in the neighborhood because the father, who was constantly in and out of jail, abused the children and quarreled with the mother when he was at home. All the children had been irregular or truant at school, and the mother, who was at first very indifferent about them and their schooling, had become alarmed because they were "getting to be bums and thieves like their father," and had willingly given her consent to the commitment of the eldest boy to the Parental School.

In another confused and miserable home, the mother, who drank and used vile language, seemed to be the source of degradation. The little boy, aged twelve, who had been absent forty-five half-days irregularly within six months, was one of eleven children, all of whom were exposed to degrading and contaminating influences. The children were not only frequently absent from school, but were reported to be unruly and a source of demoralization when present.

Other similarly wretched cases were found. A ten-year-old girl in the first grade, who had been absent forty-seven half-days during six months, was visited on the occasion of three different absences during the three weeks that our investigators were at work in the neighborhood. One day the mother said that the child had overslept, on another day that she had gone to visit an aunt in another part of town, and on the third day, that the father, who was obviously drunk, had sold the child's shoes and that the principal would not give her another pair. Another little girl, nearly fourteen years old, who was in the third grade and who had been absent sixty-two half-days during six months, was found at home taking care of her mother.

The father had deserted the family of five children after beating the mother so severely that she was in need of medical care.

In a still more wretched household the whole family, including all the six children, were still in bed when the investigator called. The house was dirty and unspeakably disorderly, with eight boarders in addition to the family of eight in six rooms. Later, stolen goods were found in the house and the family was evicted, but a newspaper story brought in a supply of funds.

In such extreme cases as these the children are really "dependent or neglected" within the meaning of the Juvenile Court law, and they are, in the language of the statute, "without proper parental care." A warning from the Department of Compulsory Education cannot possibly bring about the necessary improvement in the children's school attendance. All the conditions of family life need to be changed, and nothing short of thoroughgoing family rehabilitation will bring the home up to the level of co-operation with the school. Drunkenness on the part of either parent, crime and immorality, cases of wife desertion, and filthy conditions of living should be reported to the proper corrective agencies at the earliest possible moment.

We have pointed out elsewhere that the great difficulty connected with the treatment of girls who are brought into court as delinquent[1] is the fact that the young girl's waywardness and the conditions of degradation so often responsible for her bad conduct are not discovered until too late; cases like those cited indicate the importance of a better enforcement of the compulsory school law and of requiring absolutely regular attendance. If the absences of the children in these cases were followed up at once, the evil conditions in the home could be referred to the proper authorities for treatment so that the

[1] *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, chap. vi, "The Child from the Degraded Home: The Problem of Degeneracy," p. 105.

child's right to her minimum of education might be enforced and her statutory right to "proper parental care" be made good to her.

It was an interesting result of these 1,100 visits that very few cases of wilful truancy were discovered. Less than 2 per cent of the girls and only 7 per cent of the boys were out of school without the consent of their parents. In these cases the investigator reported that the mother was usually very indignant to learn that the child, who had been sent to school, had not arrived. One mother was surprised to find that her thirteen-year-old boy was not in school, and still more surprised to find that he had been absent, at different times during the six months, eight whole days and seventeen half-days. She was very anxious to be notified when he was absent and begged that the visitor would try to "scare him."

One boy who was found at home claimed to be sick; he had started from home to go to school but went to a fire instead. His mother said that he "just took sick" after he got home. Another boy, Aloysius, aged eight, absent eleven half-days irregularly between January 1 and February 5, was not found at home, and an angry mother who had sent him to school threatened to "see about it," and said, "He'll be there this afternoon all right." In another family, John, aged twelve and in the fifth grade, and Leo, aged eleven and in the third grade, could not be found. They were two of six children whose father was dead and whose mother worked out by the day. During six months one of them had been absent twenty-two half-days and tardy eight times; the other was absent fifteen half-days and tardy twice. A sister who was at the home said that they often played truant and were probably "bumming," that their mother wanted them to go to school, but she was away all day working and had no way of knowing whether they went or not. It is, of course, in such cases as these that the resources of the Parental School are likely to prove entirely adequate.

This chapter was entitled "Non-Attendance at the Source" since it is only too clear that it is the home and the parents, not the child and the school, that must be dealt with if the school attendance is to be rigidly enforced to the 100 per cent standard. In the vast majority of cases it was found that the children were absent with their parents' consent or at their parents' command. It is useless to talk about the waywardness of the child or the shortcomings of the schools or the teachers while this is so. In one home the investigator, supposed to be a truant officer, was received with enthusiasm by the absent boy who called out to his mother, "I told you they'd catch you if you kept me home!" The mother, a good-natured Italian woman, was much impressed by the visitor's prompt appearance, and marveled that Tony's absence could be so promptly discovered in a school with a thousand children. In another home the boy, who was washing and did not like his job, explained with satisfaction, "I told her there was eight new officers at our school and somebody would give it to her." That our investigation had a tonic effect on school attendance in both neighborhoods was generally agreed. Persistent and careful and prompt inquiry after each absent child, whether suspected of truancy or not, must, even if continued for a short time only, be beneficial because of its effect on parents and children alike. Only in this way can the causes of non-attendance be discovered.

CHAPTER X

THE HABITUAL TRUANT AND THE SCHOOLROOM INCORRIGIBLE

Careful inquiry, then, seems to indicate that truancy, which may be defined as wilful absence on the part of the child without the knowledge and consent of the parent, is a relatively unimportant factor in non-attendance. The table given in the last chapter shows that only 5 per cent of the 1,129 non-attending children who were visited were truants, that is, children whose mothers had sent them to school and did not know of their failure to attend. Moreover, the problem of wilful truancy is almost exclusively a boy problem. Nine-tenths of the truants in one school and all the truants in the second school were boys. The official machinery provided by the Board of Education for the enforcement of the compulsory education law is devised to prevent non-attendance from any cause and not merely non-attendance caused by truancy. Although the agents of this department are called truant officers, they are sent to investigate any case of absence in which the principal suspects that the children either are needlessly being kept out of school or are wilfully staying away. The machinery as developed up to the present time is, however, better fitted to secure the return of the children than to remove the causes of their failure to attend. When these causes are stubborn, the law assumes that the child's continued non-attendance indicates a defiance of the law, either on the part of the parent who continues to keep the child at home in spite of warning notices, or on the part of the child who still runs away even after the truant officer has tried to bring him back.

It has already been pointed out that the law provides for a prosecution of the defiant parent in the Municipal Court and the commitment of the habitually truant child to the Parental School through the Juvenile Court.[1] The theory of the law is that if the child will not go to school with the other children in his neighborhood he must be sent to a special school from which he cannot get away. Such children usually come from homes in which there is a breakdown of family discipline, and for this reason the discipline of the Parental School is substituted for the lack of control over the children in their own home. Obviously a breakdown of family discipline may manifest itself in relation to the school in more than one way. One child may, because of lack of home training, refuse to go to school at all, or may stay away so often as to make it impossible for him to benefit by the training when he is there. Another child, equally undisciplined and lawless, may go to school with fair regularity, but behave so badly that the school is of no benefit either to him or to the other children in the room. Such a child is said to be "guilty" of persistent violation of the rules of the school; and the law provides that those who are wilfully absent, and those who are wilfully disobedient, and those who seem to be in need of constant oversight shall alike be eligible to the Parental School, to which they may be committed by the Juvenile Court on the initiative of the Department of Compulsory Education.

Although the problem of the child who is guilty of truancy or of bad conduct is relatively a small part of the problem of non-attendance, it is nevertheless absolutely a serious problem if the large numbers of boys brought to court on this charge are considered. The Parental School was opened on January 31, 1902, and between that date and the close of the school year

[1] See chap. v, p. 86. See also chap. xi, "The Parental School," and chap. xiv, "Enforcement of the Compulsory Education Law in the Municipal Court of Chicago."

1914–15, 4,198 boys had been brought into the Juvenile Court as truants and committed to the Parental School and 1,461 other truant children who were not committed were brought into the court for discipline. It was believed that a careful study of the records of the court and of the Parental School would lead to a better understanding of the problem of truancy as well as the related problem of non-attendance.

Table XII shows the number of children brought into court each year from the year 1902, when the Parental School was established, down to July 1, 1915.

TABLE XII

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BROUGHT INTO THE JUVENILE COURT AS TRUANTS OR SCHOOL-ROOM INCORRIGIBLES, 1902–15*

Year Ending June 30	Boys	Girls	Total
1902	131	.....	131
1903	203	.....	203
1904	288	.....	288
1905	279	.....	279
1906	345	.....	345
1907	385	.....	385
1908	381	.....	381
1909	506	.....	506
1910	579	.....	579
1911	524	7	531
1912	443	4	447
1913	547	13	560
1914	496	3	499
1915	515	10	525
	5,622	37	5,659

*The data in this table and in the other tables in this chapter were obtained by transcribing the Juvenile Court records of children brought in for truancy or violation of school rules. The report of the Board of Education contains each year a statement of the number of children brought into court on these charges and the number committed to the Parental School, and as these numbers do not correspond exactly with those in our tables, it should be explained that the differences, which are slight except for a single year (1914), are probably due to the difficulties attendant upon transcribing court records months or years after they are made. It was, however, necessary to make the transcription if other facts which are not published in the board's report were to be obtained. Our table shows a total of 5,134 children brought into court between 1901–2 and 1913–14; a similar table compiled from the published reports shows a total of 5,740 children—that is, our numbers are for some years slightly lower and for some years slightly higher than those published. Some difference may arise

This table obviously does not represent the total number of wilfully truant children in Chicago during these years, but only those extreme cases that could not be dealt with by the Department of Compulsory Education without the assistance of the Juvenile Court and the Chicago Parental School. The increase in the number of boys brought to court was almost steady from year to year until 1910, and probably kept pace with the increase in the juvenile population of Chicago. This does not necessarily indicate that conditions were unchanged and that truancy was not being checked, but may be evidence of an improvement in the standard of school attendance required and in the resources for taking care of truant boys, such as the increase in the capacity of the Parental School and in the number of truant officers. It was, of course, almost useless to bring boys into court as truants when the accommodations at the Parental School were too limited to care for them even if the court wished to commit them. The slight falling off in the number of truants in 1905 was probably due to the general improvement in school attendance brought about by the compulsory education law which went into operation July 1, 1903. The more recent decline in the number committed may be due to the fact that some of those previously committed have been held for longer periods and that there are fewer vacancies at the school for new commitments.

Leaving the question of numbers, we consider next, in Table XIII, the ages of the children brought to court on the charge of truancy or "violation of rules" during the period 1902–15. The ages are given only for the whole group of

from the fact that we have included only "new cases" in our table—that is, a child brought into court in 1906, 1907, and 1908 would be counted only once (for the year 1906) in our table. Whether the same method is used in compiling the published statistics it is not possible to say. For one year only, 1914, is there a serious discrepancy between the two sets of figures. The published report shows 826 children brought to court and 424 committed; our tables give 499 brought to court and 346 committed during the same year. We are at a loss to explain so wide a difference, but it seems probable that "continuances" and "recommitments" are counted with "new cases" in making up the published total for that year, whereas our total refers only to the number of boys, not to the number of cases in court. Unless the method of compiling the published statistics was changed in 1914, it is difficult to understand why similar differences do not appear in earlier years.

children brought into court during this period, instead of being given for each year separately, because there seemed to be very little change from year to year in the proportion of children of different ages.

TABLE XIII

AGES OF CHILDREN BROUGHT TO COURT AS TRUANTS OR SCHOOLROOM INCORRIGIBLES, 1902–15

Age	Number	Percentage
7 years	54	1
8 years	164	3
9 years	469	8
10 years	865	15
11 years	1,183	21
12 years	1,500	27
13 years	1,415	25
Total	5,650*	100

*The total is 5,650 instead of 5,659 because the age was not reported in 9 cases.

This table shows that the great majority—nearly three-fourths—of these unruly children were eleven, twelve, or thirteen years of age and 15 per cent were ten years old. Although only 12 per cent of the whole number were below the age of ten, this is a relatively large number of such very young children; the fact that nearly seven hundred boys who were only seven, eight, or nine years old were considered so seriously truant as to necessitate bringing them into court is very significant. It indicates, as do so many other facts, the close relationship between truancy and dependency. There is obviously something lacking in a home that cannot discipline a boy under ten years of age.

It is of course important to know not only the number of children brought into court as truants, but the number of boys committed to the Parental School. Table XIV shows the number of boys committed from 1902 to 1915. The table is

given by years, because any change from year to year in the proportionate number of boys committed might indicate a change of policy with regard to the administration of the law. The children who were brought into court but not committed to the Parental School were usually paroled or their cases were continued to give the officers a chance to get more information or

TABLE XIV

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BROUGHT INTO COURT AND NUMBER OF BOYS COMMITTED TO THE CHICAGO PARENTAL SCHOOL, 1902–15

Year Ending June 30	Children Brought into Court	Boys Committed to Chicago Parental School	Percentage Committed
1902.....	131	92	70
1903.....	203	161	79
1904.....	288	222	77
1905.....	279	212	76
1906.....	345	245	71
1907.....	385	265	69
1908.....	381	257	68
1909.....	506	374	74
1910.....	579	473	82
1911.....	531	395	74
1912.....	447	348	78
1913.....	560	411	73
1914.....	499	346	69
1915.....	525	397	76
Total.....	5,659	4,198	74

to give the child an opportunity to show improvement, or in order to have a new petition made out when the child could more properly be dealt with as a delinquent or a dependent. It should perhaps be explained that there have been a few girls among the truants brought into court, but that no girls have been committed, since the Parental School is exclusively for boys.[1]

[1] See chap. xiv, "Enforcement of the Compulsory Education Law in the Municipal Court of Chicago," for a further discussion of the problem of the truant girl.

The number of boys committed varied year by year from 68 per cent to 82 per cent of the total number of children brought into court. In general, it seems to be the policy of the Department of Compulsory Education not to bring boys into court until all other methods of getting them to school have proved futile. The department then has a "clear case" in court showing the need for Parental School care.

The Department of Compulsory Education takes pains to obtain if possible the consent of the parents to the child's commitment to the Parental School, before bringing the case into court. Although the consent of the parents is not recognized by the court as an essential preliminary to the child's commitment,[1] the policy of the department in asking the parents' consent is undoubtedly wise, since in the majority of cases the consent is given and, as a result, the action of the court is rendered doubly impressive through this co-operation of the parents and the school authorities for the child's good. An examination of the records for a single year showed that in nearly two-thirds of the cases in which the parents' attitude was given, they consented to the child's being sent to the Parental School.

In the beginning, the activities of the Department of Compulsory Education were confined almost exclusively to the public schools, but in the year 1907–8, the services of the department were extended to all local schools,[2] including not only 252 public schools, but 142 Catholic parochial schools, 35 Lutheran parochial schools, and 6 other private schools which existed at that time. Before this date, public and parochial schools alike were imposed upon by parents who sought deliberately to mislead the school authorities and to evade the law by transferring

[1] On the legal effect of the parents' refusal to consent to commitment, see chap. i, p. 9.

[2] *Fifty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1907–8), p. 282.

children from one school to another. Such evasions of the law were not so easy after the parochial schools were brought under the supervision of the Department of Compulsory Education. Table XV shows the number of children brought to court each year from the public and from the parochial schools. From this table it is seen that although even in the early years a few boys had been brought in from the parochial schools, the proportion of boys from these schools increased very substantially after the year 1908, when the services of the truant officers were extended to parochial school children.

TABLE XV

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN FROM PUBLIC AND FROM PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS BROUGHT INTO COURT AS TRUANTS EACH YEAR FROM 1902 TO 1915

YEAR ENDING JUNE 30	NUMBER OF TRUANTS FROM		TOTALS
	Public Schools	Parochial Schools	
1902.....	126	5	131
1903.....	198	5	203
1904.....	281	7	288
1905.....	263	16	279
1906.....	334	11	345
1907.....	367	18	385
1908.....	358	23	381
1909.....	432	74	506
1910.....	469	110	579
1911.....	420	111	531
1912.....	367	80	447
1913.....	459	101	560
1914.....	384	115	499
1915.....	430	95	525
Total.....	4,888	771	5,659

It is important to note that although all these children were brought into court on a charge of truancy and were all called truants, they were technically charged either with (1) habitual

truancy, or (2) violation of school rules, or (3) both offenses. Table XVI shows the number of boys brought in on different charges and committed to the Parental School during the years from 1908 to 1915, the years for which data were available. It appears that during a period of eight years 79 per cent of the boys brought into court by the Department of Compulsory Education and committed to the Chicago Parental School were brought in on a straight charge of truancy, 17 per cent were charged with disorderly conduct at school, that is, "violation of the rules," and the remaining 4 per cent were charged with the double offense of truancy and violation of rules.

TABLE XVI

NUMBER OF BOYS CHARGED WITH HABITUAL TRUANCY AND "VIOLATION OF RULES" COMMITTED TO THE PARENTAL SCHOOL, 1908–15

Year Ending June 30	Habitual Truancy	Violation of Rules	Both Charges	Total
1908	194	48	15	257
1909	308	58	8	374
1910	389	48	36	473
1911	322	50	23	395
1912	258	73	17	348
1913	321	79	11	411
1914	272	66	8	346
1915	318	73	6	397
Total	2,382	495	124	3,001
Percentage	79	17	4	100

The question of the disposition of the truants and "schoolroom incorrigibles" who were brought into court is decided by the judge of the Juvenile Court on the same basis on which he determines the disposition of the cases of delinquent and dependent children. Children are not committed to institutions for punishment, but because no better method of dealing with them is at hand. The persistently truant or extremely incorrigible boy

who comes from a good home, and who has parents able to devote time and effort to getting him to school, is likely to be returned to his home, while another boy whose offense has been much less grave may be sent to the Parental School if home conditions are less favorable.

It is a matter of considerable importance that so many boys who seemed to be in rebellion, as it were, against the school system provided for them by the community could be dealt with only by bringing them into court. An attempt was made, therefore, to ascertain the causes of their unwillingness to go to school and of their serious misbehavior while there, and, if possible, how far the home was responsible, or the school, or the community.

In the hope of throwing some light on these questions, a more thorough study of all the truancy cases brought into court during a single year was undertaken. Such facts as could be obtained from the court records were transcribed for the 579 truant boys of the year 1910, and these facts were supplemented by such other data as could be obtained from the Parental School records. Later the principals of the schools from which the boys had come and the truant officers who brought them into court were interviewed, and, finally, their homes were visited and an effort was made to discuss sympathetically with the mother of each boy his conduct before and after his commitment. As a result of the visits to the homes valuable information was obtained relating to the families of these boys. Home conditions are probably the factor of first importance in the problem of truancy. Neglect in the home due to poverty, the death of the father, invalidism of the mother when there are a large number of small children, will almost inevitably have a disastrous effect upon the school attendance of the children.

It was pointed out in a preceding chapter that while it is not easy to determine on the basis of a single visit to the home, the

condition of the family with respect to poverty or comfort, nevertheless sufficient information can be obtained to make possible the classification of the families into economic groups.[1] Table XVII shows the number and the percentage of boys who

TABLE XVII

ECONOMIC STATUS OF HOMES OF 368 PARENTAL SCHOOL BOYS

Economic Group	Number	Percentage
Very poor	159	43
Poor	136	37
Comfortable	65	18
Very comfortable	8	2
Total	368	100

came from the different kinds of homes. It shows also that of the 368 boys whose homes were visited, the largest number in any one group, 43 per cent, were from "very poor" homes and that 80 per cent of the boys were in the two lowest groups of "poor" and "very poor" families. Poverty is not necessarily the cause of truancy, for truancy and poverty alike may be due to one and the same cause—drink or incompetence, for example —but truancy has, nevertheless, a very clear relation to poverty. A very considerable number of these "truant" families were on the books of one or more of the charitable organizations of the city. The number that obtained public outdoor relief through the county agent's office could not be ascertained, but inquiries made at the "confidential exchange" showed that 117 out of the 368 families of truant boys were being assisted by different social agencies, chiefly, of course, by the United Charities.

It is almost unnecessary to point out that the families that furnish the truant candidates for the Parental School are not

[1] See chap. ix, "Non-Attendance at the Source," p. 124, for a discussion of the method of classification.

only poor but foreign, and that many of these boys are the children of immigrant parents who have never learned to speak English and who are obviously unable to understand our educational methods and policy. These truants and incorrigibles also suffer from the fact that their homes are broken as well as poor and foreign. A very considerable number of truant boys were the children of widowed or deserted mothers; some were motherless or wholly orphaned. Table XVIII shows the num-

TABLE XVIII

PARENTAL STATUS OF TRUANT CHILDREN, 1908–15

Parental Condition	Number	Percentage
Father dead	680	17
Mother dead	341	9
Both parents dead	78	2
Separated or divorced	35	1
Father deserted	121	3
Mother deserted	30	1
One or both parents insane	16	*
Father or mother blind or crippled	6	*
Families in abnormal condition	1,307	33
Families apparently normal	2,683	67
Total number of families†	3,990	100

*Less than 1 per cent.

†Parental condition was not reported in 38 cases.

ber of children who came from homes of this kind during the eight-year period for which data were available. According to this table 67 per cent of the boys came from homes that were apparently normal in that they had both parents living, and 33 per cent, a very large proportion, were from homes broken by death, desertion, or some similar calamity.[1] In 20 per cent

[1] It is of interest that data for the year 1909–10, when information was secured from records of private agencies to supplement court records, show an even larger proportion of broken homes.

of the cases the boy was the child of a widowed or deserted mother, who was obliged to work in order to keep her home and children together.

It seems clear that the working mother is an important factor in promoting truancy. For example, out of 368 boys whose homes were visited, 122, or 33 per cent, had working mothers. The occupations of these women were mostly unskilled and underpaid. They were chiefly washwomen, scrubwomen, and seamstresses, but some were waitresses and midwives, a few sold newspapers on the street, and others worked in factories. In many cases their work was irregular. Either they were out of work entirely at times, or they worked only two or three days in the week. The significant thing is that so many of these women who try to be wage-earners and at the same time mothers and home-makers for a large family of children fail in both occupations. The mother is obliged to neglect both her home and her children, and truancy is one of the first symptoms of serious neglect.

It should not, however, be overlooked that a few of these boys came from comfortable homes. Table XVII showed 18 per cent from fairly comfortable and 2 per cent from unquestionably comfortable homes. Although small numerically, this group of boys presents a most troublesome problem. It is probably true that the cases of children from fairly well-to-do but undisciplined homes are the most difficult of treatment. Such homes are not degraded, and there is no obviously demoralizing condition on which an appeal to the Juvenile Court might be based; they are not homes in receipt of charitable relief and so they are not subject to the authority and control to which some weaker families are subjected.

For example, in one such "comfortable" home a truant boy, who had been greatly indulged, was allowed to sell papers on the street until he became demoralized. The mother excused him, saying "he did not like to go to school but liked to

sell papers and to make his pennies," although she said that he did not need to earn money. The principal, of course, said that the mother spoiled him by letting him stay away from school.

In another "comfortable" home, a well-furnished but extremely disorderly six-room apartment, where there were four children, the father was a man of good habits, an engineer, earning very good wages but working at night, so that the children saw very little of him. The mother, who had been married at seventeen, was incompetent and unable to control the children, even when they were quite small. The father, who was Catholic, and the mother, who was Protestant, quarreled a great deal. They were alternately very severe and very indulgent with the children, and there was a general lack of discipline in the home. When the two boys were nine and seven years old, they were both brought into court for habitual truancy and sent to the Parental School.

A careful study of the home conditions from which the Parental School boys came showed many similar cases of comfortable but "slack" homes, of indifferent fathers and of weak, easy-going, indolent mothers. Sometimes the fact that there is a large family of children gives the mother an excuse for neglecting some of them, but unfortunately those neglected are the ones in need of special care.

One boy, who was sent to the Parental School when he was only nine years old, belonged to a family of nine children. The mother complained that she could not control him and wished to have him committed. She said that he had begun smoking cigarettes when he was only six years old and the habit had been growing on him steadily, that he stayed out late at night, and was quite beyond her control. After four months at the Parental School the boy was paroled, but in six months he was returned again. The second time he remained eight months, and he told the investigator who called at his home during his second parole that he would be glad to go back again.

Occasionally also there are cases of unreasonable and hysterical parents who are constantly interfering with the school rules and the regulations. In one family in which there were ten children, all of whom had had trouble at school because of the mother's constant interferences, one boy found it easier and pleasanter to play truant than to be the occasion of persistent wrangling. It became necessary to commit him to the Parental School as a habitual truant, although he came from a comfortable home and had well-meaning and seemingly intelligent parents.

In another family two boys from a good home gave a great deal of trouble at school because they were encouraged by their parents in a defiant attitude toward any attempt to discipline them. The younger boy was finally sent to the Parental School for violation of the rules and for truancy, and the mother was so indignant at the attempt to discipline her boy that she moved out of the neighborhood. The boy spent two months at the Parental School, and, although the mother disapproved very strongly of the boy's commitment, she told the investigator who questioned her that after frequent visits to the school she came to think highly of it and she felt sure that it had had a most beneficial effect upon her son.

Lack of discipline was found to be especially common in cases in which the mother was ill or the parents were dead or divorced and the children living with relatives. One boy's grandmother, for example, had always spoiled him by giving him pennies for cigarettes and refusing to co-operate with the teachers. In another case the parents were divorced and the ten-year-old boy, who was in the second grade, was brought into court as a habitual truant. He had attended at least six different schools, public and private, and was charged with habitual truancy, incorrigibility, and stealing. It appeared that his parents were divorced, that his mother had remarried, that the boy had lived for years with his grandmother and had

then divided his time between five aunts, two uncles, his stepfather's home, and his father's boarding place. After he had been five months at the Parental School, he was paroled to live with his mother, but within a week jumped from a second-story window at midnight and ran away to an aunt who was glad to harbor him until he was returned to the Parental School for violating his parole. After another term there, he was again paroled to his mother, but soon ran away to his father, who was very indulgent and liked to have him around, although the father's boarding place was in a most disreputable neighborhood and was an entirely unfit place for a boy.

Attention has been called to the fact that these children who offend against the rules of the school or refuse to attend the school sessions are brought before the same court that deals with delinquent and dependent children under the juvenile court law. In a later chapter[1] attention is called to the cases of truant children who had already been before the court, either as delinquent or dependent. But the cases cited here indicate that many of the truants and schoolroom incorrigibles share with the other two groups their essential characteristics, namely "lack of proper parental care."[2] The truant child may not have become technically delinquent, the home may not yet have

[1] See chap. xiii, "Truancy in Relation to Dependency and Delinquency."

[2] See *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 23, sec. 169, in which the following definitions are found:

"For the purpose of this act, the words 'dependent child' and 'neglected child' shall mean any male child who while under the age of seventeen years or any female child who while under the age of eighteen years, for any reason, is destitute, homeless or abandoned; or dependent upon the public for support; or has not proper parental care or guardianship; or habitually begs or receives alms; or is found living in any house of ill-fame or with any vicious or disreputable person; or has a home which by reason of neglect, cruelty or depravity, on the part of its parents, guardian or any other person in whose care it may be, is an unfit place for such a child; and any child who while under the age of ten years is found begging, peddling or selling any articles or singing or playing any musical instrument for gain

reached the stage of unfitness which renders it imperative for the child to be placed under court guardianship as dependent. Later he may become delinquent or dependent, but for the time being he remains under the educational authorities. Any social agency that can discover the conditions hostile to child life and that has the power to deal with them for the safeguarding of the child and the upbuilding of the home has an unparalleled opportunity for social usefulness. Some of the machinery that has been devised in Chicago for dealing both with truant children and with indifferent or defiant parents will be described in the next two chapters.

upon the street or giving any public entertainments or accompanies or is used in aid of any person so doing.

"The words 'delinquent child' shall mean any male child who while under the age of seventeen years or any female child who while under the age of eighteen years, violates any law of this State; or is incorrigible, or knowingly associates with thieves, vicious or immoral persons; or without just cause and without that [the] consent of its parents, guardian or custodian absents itself from its home or place of abode, or is growing up in idleness or crime; or knowingly frequents a house of ill-repute; or knowingly frequents any policy shop or place where any gaming device is operated; or frequents any saloon or dram shop where intoxicating liquors are sold; or patronizes or visits any public pool room or bucket shop; or wanders about the streets in the night time without being on any lawful business or lawful occupations; or habitually wanders about any railroad yards or tracks or jumps or attempts to jump onto [any] moving train; or enters any car or engine without lawful authority; or uses vile, obscene, vulgar, profane or indecent language in [any] public place or about any school house; or is guilty of indecent or lascivious conduct; any child committing any of these acts herein mentioned shall be deemed a delinquent child and shall be cared for as such in the manner hereinafter provided."

CHAPTER XI

THE PARENTAL SCHOOL

Attention was called in the chapter dealing with the causes of non-attendance[1] to the fact that, in a number of cases, the parents are unable to make their children go regularly to school or to secure their good behavior when they are there. The following quotation from a report of the Board of Education published in 1893 indicates the need that was felt more than twenty years ago for an institution adapted to the peculiar needs of such children, and the serious objections felt against suspension from school as the only penalty for misbehavior:

> Responsibility for the proper restraint, training and care of this class of children, rests first upon the parents, then upon the State. Many parents have appealed to us during the year, asking what could be done to save a wilful, ungovernable child. No provision is made for their restraint, until they violate some law under which they can be arrested as criminals, and then they are committed to the jail, bridewell, or prison. The question of protecting society by the right education of these children has been considered for several years by the various clubs and charitable organizations. . . . . Instead of suspending refractory and vicious children from our schools, provision should be made so that a child who is not manageable with better children, shall first be placed under the care of special teachers in a disciplinary school, and when they become unmanageable by parents and teachers, they should be confined in a parental home or school, thus providing a means of properly educating and training every child.

The gradual realization of the necessity for providing effective machinery for dealing with these children was traced

[1] See chap. ix, "Non-Attendance at the Source," p. 146.

in another chapter,[1] and it was shown that when the parental school law was passed in 1899 and the Chicago Parental School finally opened its doors in 1902, hope was expressed that there had begun a new era in the care of children.

The parental school law[2] provided that any truant officer or any agent of the Board of Education or any reputable citizen of Chicago could petition the Circuit or County Court (Juvenile Branch) to inquire into the case of any child between seven and fourteen years of age who was found not to be attending school or was reported to be guilty of habitual truancy or of persistent violation of the rules of the school, and the court was authorized to commit any such child to the Parental School until he became fourteen years of age. The school opened January 31, 1902, and between that date and the end of the school year in June, 1915, 4,198 boys had been committed to the institution.[3]

The school is located on a farm in the sparsely settled northwest section of the city, known as Bowmanville. The farm contains 110 acres and is stocked with farm animals and fowls, so that the boys can have work out of doors, both on little plots of their own for which they are responsible, and in connection with the general work of the farm under the supervision of a trained farmer and teacher of agriculture. There is likewise provision for manual training of the usual kind, and, of course, for the ordinary subjects taught in the first seven grades of the elementary schools. The school, which was able to care for only thirteen boys when it was opened in January, 1902, has been enlarged several times until it has now eight cottages in each of which 40 boys can be cared for.

[1] See chap. v, "Parallel Development of Child Labor and Compulsory Education Laws," p. 86.

[2] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, secs. 144, 145.

[3] See chap. x, "The Habitual Truant and the Schoolroom Incorrigible," Table XIV, "Number of Boys Committed to the Parental School, 1902–15."

Under the law, a child may remain under the jurisdiction of the school until he is fourteen years of age, when he is automatically discharged. No provision is made in the parental school law for children between fourteen and sixteen years of age, although children between these ages are now under the jurisdiction of the compulsory education authorities. This lack of provision in the parental school law for children who have reached the age of fourteen is a serious omission. When the law was passed in 1899, the compulsory school law provided for a fourteen-year-age limit, but the amendment to the compulsory law in 1907 which extended the period of compulsory attendance, under certain conditions, to the age of sixteen should have been accompanied by a change in the parental school law extending the age limit to sixteen for that institution or providing a new school for children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. The effect of the discrepancy between the age limits in the parental school law and in the compulsory attendance law has been discussed in several reports of the Board of Education.[1] For example, the president of the board in his annual report in 1914 stated emphatically his belief in the necessity of amending the law: "The parental school law should consistently provide sixteen years as the maximum age of commitment, instead of fourteen as at present."[2]

After a boy has been committed to the school he may be released on parole if his conduct is satisfactory during the first four weeks after his commitment. In that case he is returned to his home, but remains subject to the control of the school for a year from the date of his commitment. Reports are made by the principal of the school to which the child is returned after his release; and if he attends school regularly and is well

[1] Annual reports of the Board of Education of Chicago, 1909–10, p. 33; 1910–11, p. 133; 1911–12, p. 183; 1913–14, p. 417.

[2] *Sixtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1913–14), see p. 14.

behaved, he is honorably discharged at the end of the year. Otherwise he is returned to the Parental School, and the law provides that he must then be kept there for at least three months before he is again paroled, and in case he is returned a second time to the school he must be kept for twelve months before his third parole is granted him. The superintendent of the school says with reference to the conduct of the boys who are paroled that "at first practically all reports are good," and it is not until a few months after parole that reports of unsatisfactory conduct begin to come in.

The truth is, of course, that a return to earlier habits on the part of the boy is exactly what is to be expected, if he returns to the conditions out of which arose his earlier truancy or incorrigibility. For example, of the 326 boys in the school on July 1, 1913, 110 came from homes in which either one or both parents had died, and 36 from homes in which one or both had deserted, and it has already been pointed out that the vast majority come from homes of great poverty. The lack of care resulting from these conditions which were largely responsible for bringing the boys into court and into the school is likely to bring them there again. The children are, of course, young. While the majority of the boys committed are twelve and thirteen years old, there are each year considerable numbers of boys of eight, nine, and ten years old. It is not a matter of surprise if, when the home conditions are unsatisfactory, the old habits reappear when these very young boys are returned after a few months of care and discipline and it is found necessary again to take them away from the old conditions and the old surroundings.

It has been said that these boys are committed to the school on a kind of indeterminate sentence with a minimum commitment of four weeks. Since they are of such different ages and come from such different home conditions, it is found necessary to keep some of them much longer than others.

Table XIX shows for the boys committed during one representative year the number of months spent in the Parental School on their first commitment. According to these figures, 58 per cent of the boys committed during a single year remained at the school between four and six months; 25 per cent remained longer than six months; very few remained more than nine months; and 17 per cent remained less than four months.

TABLE XIX

NUMBER OF MONTHS SPENT IN PARENTAL SCHOOL ON FIRST COMMITMENT BY 471 BOYS COMMITTED DURING A SINGLE YEAR

NUMBER OF MONTHS	BOYS		
	Number	Percentage	
1 and less than 2.....	26	6	Less than
2 and less than 3.....	14	3	4 months:
3 and less than 4.....	39	8	**17 per cent**
4 and less than 5.....	144	30	4–6 months:
5 and less than 6.....	130	28	**58 per cent**
6 and less than 7.....	50	11	
7 and less than 8.....	33	7	
8 and less than 9.....	15	3	More than
9 and less than 10.....	7	1	6 months:
10 and less than 11.....	4	1	**25 per cent**
11 and less than 12.....	5	1	
12 and over.....	4	1	
Total*.....	471	100	

*The correct total of boys committed during the year was 473, but the total is given as 471 instead of 473 because the records of two boys could not be found. The data given are for the year ending June 30, 1910.

With regard to the effect of Parental School care on the conduct of the boys committed, the statement of the superintendent is to the effect that "80 to 90 per cent of the boys make good" and that "the object of the school is accomplished in fully 85 per cent of the cases,"[1] but obviously no such quantitative

[1] *Sixtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1913–14), p. 382.

measure can be accepted. The question of the effect of the Parental School treatment upon the boys who are sent there cannot be measured by any statistical tests. Certain definite facts are available with regard to the number of boys returned for violation of parole, but it must be pointed out that the return of a paroled boy is the result of careful follow-up work on the part of the Parental School authorities. It would be easy, if their methods were lax, to show a negligible percentage of returns. Of the 471 boys committed during 1909–10, the year for which figures are available, 119 had been returned to the school for violation of parole up to April, 1912; of these 19 had been twice returned. Of the remainder, 65 were discharged from the school because the age limit had been reached and they could not be placed on parole at all, and 112 others were discharged for age during parole. That is, 294 boys were under fourteen years of age and therefore eligible for return, and 119, or 40 per cent of these, were returned.

That so large a proportion of boys were returned for violating their paroles would suggest the economy of supplementing the work of the school, which deals only with the child, by some agency for dealing with parents and the home or with the neighborhood to which the child is to be returned. These figures merely confirm and give a quantitative value to the series of cases cited in the preceding chapters. The school cannot, in the nature of things, undo the consequences of the earlier experiences of the child, nor in all cases render him immune to the harmful influences that lie about his home and the neighborhood in which he lives. In the cases of many children the influence of the Parental School is completely successful, and in the case of some, it might be possible to secure the needed discipline with even less stringent treatment.

In the course of the visits of our investigators to the homes of the truant boys, the mothers were asked whether or not they had ever visited the Parental School and what they thought

of the training the boys received there. It appeared that in more than 90 per cent of the cases, the mother or someone from the family had gone to see the boy during his detention. On the whole, the mothers who visited the school—and nearly three hundred of them did visit their boys while they were there —were very much pleased with it, and expressed their approval of the training the boys received there. One stepmother, in fact, said, "the place was much too good" for the boys who went there, and one mother objected that it was such a nice place that it made the boys want to go back.

Testimony to the effect that the boy's conduct had improved after his return was almost universal. Now and then, of course, a mother insisted that her boy had been committed to the school only because of the malice of the teacher or the truant officer, and maintained that he had always been so good that there was no room for improvement in his conduct. Sometimes, too, the mothers explained that the boys had been released because they were "of age," and now that they had gone to work there could be, obviously, no further trouble about school attendance. But more than two-thirds of all the mothers interviewed believed that the discipline at the school had been a kind of moral tonic and that the boy's conduct had shown a distinct improvement after his return. More than one mother who thought that her boy had begun to show signs of a moral relapse spoke with great feeling of his improved conduct just after he returned from the school and wished that he were not too old to be sent back, as she feared he was drifting into his "old ways" and was again in need of disciplinary treatment for a time.

It was a common experience for the investigator to be told by the mother of the boy's superior "manners" after his release. "He always gets a chair for me to sit down and never used to"; "He always hangs up his clothes now and puts his things away"; and "They'll learn 'em to do there what you can't learn 'em at home," were the comments frequently heard.

One boy "came home fat" and was "so good" to her, his mother said, until he lost his job and got into some new difficulty. Another boy who was "wild and crazy" before going to the school came back "steady" and "cleaned the house nicely" when his mother asked him to. Another mother, equally appreciative of improved domestic habits, thought the school had "done everything" for her boy; "when he came home," she said, "you should see him, he kept so clean, set chairs for me, and gave the lady a seat in the car"; of course, she said, she "couldn't always keep him like that, but never yet since his return" had he made any trouble that she knew of. Another mother noted that her boy had not yet gone back to his old gang, and he had been home so long she had begun to lose her fear that he would rejoin the old companions who had been in part, at least, responsible for "his trouble." One mother said that the Parental School was a fine place for boys because "they'll do there what they won't do at home"; another explained that her boy used to "chase the streets, and someone had to go out at night and hunt him" before he was sent away, but after he came home from the Parental School he "stayed at home evenings and was nice about the house." Even the briefer expressions of appreciation such as "Oh, he learned a lot" or "He minds better now," which were so common, were significant.

The fact that out of nearly three hundred "Parental School mothers" who were interviewed, not one had anything but kindly appreciation of the school's work and influence is an unusual tribute to the fine work which is being done there.

In many cities the formation of special "truant rooms" has been adopted as another method of dealing with certain types of truant boys. In Chicago the first experiment of this kind was the fitting-out of a room at the Jenner School with work benches and other facilities for handwork and with twenty-four desks for study. A teacher especially adapted for dealing

with difficult and unruly boys was placed in charge, and twenty-four boys from various schools were sent back to their homes by the judge of the Juvenile Court, but with the understanding that they were to go to this truant room instead of to their old places in school. In discussing the experiment, a recent report of the Board of Education said, "For the first time the boys became conscious of the power of the state to control their actions; they lived at home and were all anxious to return to their own schools, which they could do after several months of approved good behavior."

This first truant room in Chicago was established eight years ago, and eleven other such rooms have since been opened. In so far as the truant room is used as a substitute for commitment to the Parental School, a very considerable economy is effected, since obviously the cost of the maintenance of the children at the Parental School is very high compared with the cost of educating the child coming from his own home to the ordinary sessions of the day schools. On the other hand it should be remembered that the use of the truant rooms must be definitely restricted to the boys who come from homes where the conditions are favorable and that the boy whose greatest need is to be taken out of an unfavorable or demoralizing home environment cannot be helped by a transfer to a truant room.

Table XX shows the estimated average per capita cost of the Parental School children as compared with the average cost of the children in the regular grades. The per capita cost in the "truant room" is of course higher than the average per capita cost as given below.

The difference between the per capita cost in the Parental School and in the elementary school is very great, and it is scarcely necessary to explain that this difference pays for the support of the child, except for the clothing which the parents are required to furnish, as well as for his schooling, and that this support is on a level of decency and comfort that is

TABLE XX

COST OF MAINTENANCE AND PER CAPITA COST IN THE CHICAGO PARENTAL SCHOOL, 1902–14, COMPARED WITH AVERAGE PER CAPITA COST IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

(Compiled from Annual Reports of the Chicago Board of Education.)

Year	Parental School Total Cost of Maintenance	Parental School Average Membership	Parental School Annual per Capita Cost	Average Cost per Capita in Chicago Elementary Schools
1901– 2.....	$37,223.46	87	$427.85	$27.92
1902– 3.....	60,161.96	154	390.66	26.31
1903– 4.....	69,777.80	188	371.15	28.16
1904– 5.....	73,159.65	208	351.73	27.85
1905– 6.....	78,815.34	212	371.77	27.57
1906– 7.....	77,336.84	217	356.39	29.44
1907– 8.....	80,602.72	253	318.58	28.84
1908– 9.....	87,448.73	263	332.62	32.60
1909–10.....	86,818.51	298	291.82	32.77
1910–11.....	89,812.02	303	296.70	34.40
1911–12.....	80,521.29	313	257.50	35.11
1912–13.....	91,141.79	322	279.69	36.62
1913–14.....	90,347.17	313	288.46	37.90

vastly superior to the standard maintained in the homes from which the majority of the children come. For example, each boy has, as one mother put it, "a little white bed all to himself." It also pays for a longer period of instruction, since the per capita cost for the Parental School is based on membership for twelve months, while the ordinary day school lasts less than ten. And there are additional and costly features of manual and agricultural training in the Parental School to which reference has already been made.

Two points should be made in this connection. The first is that treatment in the Parental School is too costly, both in pain of enforced separation to the parents and children and in dollars and cents to the city, to be used for cases that could be handled successfully in other ways. If an agency could be developed by which the home could be so dealt with as to do

away with causes of the child's irregularity, and so reduce the number of boys committed and recommitted to the Parental School, it might pay for itself. It is admitted, however, that a skilful agency of the kind referred to would probably discover many more cases than are known today for whose treatment the aid of the court and of the Parental School would be invoked. And the second point is that when an institution can render such efficient and valuable service to children in need of such care, it is most unjust that any who are in need should fail to benefit. This injustice is most flagrant in the case of girl truants. Attention is called elsewhere to the difference between the non-attending boy who becomes a nuisance and the non-attending girl who may be a drudge or who may in fact be the victim of demoralizing experiences while she is out of school.

Obviously, however, the failure to receive the benefits of the school intended for her are as serious in the case of the girl as of the boy, if not more serious. Table XXI, which has been compiled from the reports of the Superintendent of Compulsory Education, shows that he has had to serve notices in the cases

TABLE XXI

NUMBER AND SEX OF TRUANTS DEALT WITH BY THE CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION, 1906–14

Year Ending June 30	Number Boys	Number Girls	Total
1906.....	4,750	151	4,901
1907.....	3,004	266	3,270
1908.....	3,294	119	3,413
1909.....	2,942	112	3,054
1910.....	3,482	132	3,614
1911.....	4,086	144	4,230
1912.....	3,651	150	3,801
1913.....	3,577	210	3,787
1914.....	3,241	158	3,399
Total....	32,027	1,442	33,469

of nearly 1,500 girls during the years 1906–14. Although, according to this table, nearly 1,500 girls or their parents have been "warned" concerning the compulsory attendance law, only 37 girls have been brought into the Juvenile Court.[1] Moreover, since there is no cottage for girls at the Parental School, it is useless to bring them before the court, as there is no opportunity for commitment and a reproof is of little effect. In an earlier study of the wards of the Juvenile Court,[2] attention was called to the illiterate condition of girls brought into court as delinquent. Emphasis was then expressly laid on the fact that more perfect rather than less perfect machinery is needed for dealing with truant girls than for dealing with truant boys, because there is the greater temptation to exploit them in the home and because it was found that the delinquent illiterate girls come from poorer homes than those from which the boys come. The superintendent of compulsory education had already called attention in 1907 to the increase in the number of truant girls and of delinquent girls. Now, as then, however, so far as the advantages of the Parental School are concerned, the girl is wholly neglected, and, except so far as prosecutions in the Municipal Court may bring pressure to bear on a certain group of parents,[3] the truant girl is uncared for until she comes before the Juvenile Court as delinquent.

[1] See chap. x, Table XII.

[2] *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, pp. 143–45.

[3] See chap. xiv, "Enforcement of the Compulsory Education Law in the Municipal Court," p. 205.

CHAPTER XII

TRUANCY AND NON-ATTENDANCE IN RELATION TO MENTAL AND PHYSICAL DEFECTS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

Because a certain minimum of education is essential, the school authorities are required to secure the attendance of all the children within the age limits fixed by the statute. Progressive school authorities, however, go beyond this and undertake to do whatever must be done not only to secure the attendance of the child, but to see that he is in condition to profit by his work when he is there. The underlying principle here is that of prevention—the prevention of physical, mental, and moral weakness or deterioration—the prevention, in the case of the problem under discussion, of truancy and non-attendance rather than the application of disciplinary methods to these problems. An illustration of such preventive work is to be found in the development of the school medical and nursing services.

The volume of absence due to sickness, preventable or inevitable, is of course very great. The lowering of the vitality and capacity of the children by physical and nervous defects is also symptomatic of serious educational loss. In the year 1909, for example, the Chicago Health Department examined 647,842 school children for the prevention of the spread of contagious diseases. As a result of this examination it was found necessary to exclude 15,618 children from school as a preventive measure against the spread of contagion. Moreover, 123,897 children were given complete physical examinations and of these, 63,199, or in round numbers more than 50 per cent, were found to have such physical defects as defective teeth, 44,483; bad tonsils, 27,556; impaired vision, 21,824;

anaemia, 3,606; poor nutrition, 2,983; skin diseases, 2,593; impaired hearing, 2,830; and orthopedic defects, 1,433.[1]

More recently, during the year 1915, the Chicago Health Department made 1,128,232 inspections of school children beside 79,383 physical examinations. As a result of the inspections 21,730 children were excluded from school; as a result of the physical examinations 37,356 children, or again nearly 50 per cent, were found to suffer from physical defects, and 32,860 cases were referred to the school nurses. They, in turn, made 1,316 calls at the homes, and took or sent more than twenty thousand children to dispensaries or other agencies for treatment.[2] The social waste that has been prevented through the installation of the school medical and nursing service is incalculable, and there is every reason to hope for the further development of these important social agencies.

No adequate discussion of the subject of medical inspection and of the school nursing service can be undertaken here. The importance of medical inspection not only for the purpose of preventing epidemics, but for the purpose of discovering physical defects that may be removed or lessened, is generally recognized and is the subject of an extensive and rapidly increasing body of literature.[3] The importance of medical examination of those who leave school to go to work, in order that a minimum of

[1] See *Bulletin of the Chicago School of Sanitary Instruction*, November 15, 1913, in which may be found a summary of the work of medical inspection of school children for several years.

[2] See *Bulletin of the Chicago School of Sanitary Instruction*, February 5, 1916. The Division of Child Hygiene was constituted in 1915 as follows: school health officers, 106; supervising health officers, 18; field nurses, 92; supervising field nurses, 6; superintendent of nurses, 1; dental surgeons, 10; supervising dentist, 1; ophthalmologist, 1; infant welfare physicians, 3; infant welfare nurses, 3; station attendants, 3.

[3] See, for example, W. S. Cornell, *Health and Medical Inspection of School Children* (Philadelphia, 1912); L. H. Gulick and L. P. Ayres, *Medical Inspection of Schools* (New York, 1913); L. D. Cruickshank and

physical development may be assured, hardly needs emphasis. The working child, however, is discussed in a later chapter.

When the numbers of defective and sick children are so great, it is easy to think only of the loss of school opportunity connected with physical incapacity. In the very volume of the inevitable loss, however, is to be found the reason for reducing to a minimum the preventable absences. That sickness is responsible for a very great deal of non-attendance is well known, and further information on this point was contributed recently by the Chicago Health Department. A study of school absentees was made by the Health Department in the winter of 1915–16 during the prevalence of an epidemic of grip, when there was likewise danger from scarlet fever. During the four days preceding the Christmas, 1915, recess, 6,407 calls were made at the homes of absent children and the causes of their absence are grouped in Table XXII.

TABLE XXII

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CAUSES OF ABSENCE

(Compiled From *Bulletin of Chicago School of Sanitary Instruction*, February 5, 1916, p. 29.)

Absent because of illness		61
"Respiratory diseases"	47	
"Other severe conditions"	3	
"Vaccination"	2	
"Contagious diseases"	4	
"Indisposition"	5	
Absence from miscellaneous causes		39
Total		100

L. W. Mackenzie, *School Clinics at Home and Abroad* (London, 1913); T. N. Kelynack, *Medical Examination of Schools and Scholars* (London, 1910); L. W. Mackenzie and E. Matthew, *The Medical Inspection of School Children* (Edinburgh, 1904); Great Britain, *Annual Reports of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education* (especially 1910).

According to this table, the Health Department nurses found the absence of 61 per cent of the children due to illness. The remaining 39 per cent were absent for various causes, such as "no clothing," "truancy," or because the nurse reported "wrong address," or "not at home."

It seems scarcely necessary to develop arguments in favor of the support of an adequate medical and nursing staff. When millions of dollars are being spent each year on educational facilities, it is of course an elementary economy to prevent the waste of these facilities through preventable absences or because the children who attend are not in fit condition to take advantage of the opportunities offered them.

The importance of discovering mental defects by prompt and adequate examination and of securing proper methods of instruction for mentally deficient children is another aspect of the prevention of social waste that cannot be treated in this volume.[1] In this connection, however, some facts relating to the relation between truancy and retardation[2] taken from the records of the truant boys brought into the Juvenile Court become of interest. It is generally agreed that absence, whether preventable or not, because it disturbs the child's relation to his school work, leads often to truancy, as well as to retardation.

[1] There is an increasing body of literature dealing with this subject. See, for example, W. E. Fernald, *Importance of the Early Discovery and Treatment of Defectives in Public School Classes* (Philadelphia, 1906); C. P. Lapage, *Feeblemindedness in Children of School Age* (Manchester, 1911); G. E. Shuttleworth and W. A. Potts, *Mentally Deficient Children* (Philadelphia, 1910); A. F. Tredgold, *Mental Deficiency* (New York, 1912); A. Holmes, *Conservation of the Child* (Philadelphia, 1912); W. H. Holmes, *School Organization and the Individual Child* (Worcester, Mass., 1912); T. N. Kelynack, *Defective Children* (London, 1915).

[2] On this subject, which we cannot discuss at length here, see, for example, L. P. Ayres, *Laggards in Our Schools* (New York, 1909); L. B. Blan, *Special Study of the Incidence of Retardation* (New York, 1911); L. Witmer, *The Special Class for Backward Children* (Philadelphia, 1911).

In studying the Juvenile Court records of truant boys in Chicago it was possible to compare the ages and the grades of the boys brought into court, and Table XXIII has therefore been prepared showing the ages of the boys brought in during the two years 1909–10 and 1910–11, together with the grades last attended. A comparison between the ages and the grades in this table makes it possible, of course, to ascertain how far these boys were making normal progress in school.

TABLE XXIII

AGE AND GRADE OF TRUANT BOYS BROUGHT INTO COURT BETWEEN JULY 1, 1909, AND JUNE 30, 1911*

AGE	SUB-NORMAL ROOMS	GRADE								TOTAL
		1st	2d	3d	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	
7 years..	.....	3	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5
8 years..	.....	13	22	4	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	39
9 years..	.....	15	26	37	6	1	.....	.....	.....	85
10 years..	.....	11	33	62	33	12	.....	.....	.....	151
11 years..	2	9	23	64	75	36	7	1	.....	217
12 years..	3	13	24	56	97	89	30	7	.....	319
13 years..	1	6	8	45	69	70	53	19	3	274
14 years..	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	1	2
Total..	6	70	138	268	280	209	90	27	4	1,092

*Data from court records. These are boys brought into court for the first time as truants. They may have been in before as delinquents or dependents. The total number of cases in the table is 1,092 instead of 1,110, because the records, although giving the ages failed to give the grades in eighteen cases.

The table shows that although only 6 of these boys had been placed in the subnormal or ungraded rooms, the great majority were not so far advanced in school as normal children who had attended school regularly should have been. A normal child who entered school at the age of seven, as required by the

compulsory education law, would have passed out of the first grade and into the second at the age of eight; he would have been in the third grade at nine, the fourth grade at ten, and so on. In Table XXIII, showing age and grade, the heavy zig-zag line divides the boys making reasonable progress in school from those who are below the standard demanded of normal boys at the corresponding ages. All the numbers below the heavy black line represent retarded children, 67 boys from eight to thirteen years of age still in the first grade, 114 boys from nine to thirteen still in the second grade, 227 boys from ten to thirteen still in the third grade, 241 boys from eleven to thirteen still in the fourth grade, 160 twelve- and thirteen-year-old boys in the fifth grade, and 53 thirteen-year-old boys in the sixth grade—a total of 868 retarded, or 80 per cent of all the boys brought into court by the Department of Compulsory Education during the years 1909–11. Of the thirteen-year-old boys, 1 was in the sub-normal room, 6 were in the first grade, 8 were in the second grade, 45 in the sixth grade; only 22 of these boys were above the sixth grade where the normal thirteen-year-old boy belongs.

The relation between truancy and retardation was recognized as being a very close one by the members of the New York School Inquiry Commission, who, in discussing the subject of non-promotion, reported that irregular attendance was "a decided factor in increasing the number of non-promotions," and pointed out that since absence was "a very large factor in increasing the number of non-promotions and hence in increasing congestion, the corresponding responsibility of all concerned to get children into school and to keep them there is therefore clear."

The educational expert employed by this commission to investigate "promotion, non-promotion and part-time" reported on the basis of a careful statistical investigation that in all

grades, the rate of promotion varied inversely with the amount of absence.[1]

On the subject of the physical condition and mental development of truant boys, on which the regularity of their attendance and their conduct and progress in school would in part depend, certain facts are to be found in the records of the Department of Child-Study and of the Parental School. The records of the Department of Child-Study are available, for example, in the cases of 456 out of 473 boys committed to the Parental School in 1909–10, and show that, according to the tests given by that department, 65, or 15 per cent of the boys, were well endowed; 38, or 9 per cent of them, were classified as bright; and 155, or 36 per cent were normal; that is 60 per cent of the whole number were mentally normal; on the other hand, 37, or 8 per cent, were considered degenerate; 61 others, or 14 per cent, were below normal; and 79, or 18 per cent, were the victims of nervous defects, making a total of 40 per cent that could not be called normal.

But in the judgment of the department 106 of those who were mentally normal or above normal were in bad physical condition, while 109 others suffered from both physical and

[1] Some of the conclusions bearing on this point are so pertinent that they may be quoted at length:

"(3) The amount of absence in all grades is large; whether it cannot be greatly reduced is a question worthy of immediate and earnest attention.

"(4) With the exception of the IA grade, absence affected more seriously the rate of promotion in the higher than in the lower grades; and in all grades, the rate of promotion varies inversely with the amount of absence.

"(5) Absence is a very large factor in increasing the number of non-promotions and hence in increasing congestion.

"(6) In view of the effect of absence on the child's progress through the school, the first duty of teachers and principals should be to keep children regular in attendance, and the corresponding responsibility of the department of school attendance is, therefore, very great."—*Report of the New York School Inquiry Commission*, Vol. I, p. 618.

mental or nervous defects. In other words, only 152, or 35 per cent, were in the judgment of the department both normal mentally and in "fair" physical condition.

TABLE XXIV

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CONDITION OF BOYS COMMITTED TO CHICAGO PARENTAL SCHOOL, 1909–10

(From reports of the Department of Child-Study)

MENTAL CONDITION	PHYSICAL CONDITION				
	Good	Fair	Bad	Total	Percentage
Well endowed	20	23	22	65	15
Bright	3	14	21	38	9
Normal	39	53	63	155	36
Below normal	4	17	40	61	14
Degenerate	4	13	20	37	8
Nervous defects only	5	25	49	79	18
Total	75	145	215	435	100
No report on mental condition	2	10	9	21	.....
Total	77	155	224	456	.....

The precise nature of the physical disability from which the boys suffered is a matter of great interest. Further information furnished by the records showed that the largest number, 158, or 35 per cent, out of 456 boys examined, were said to be either undernourished or lacking in vitality, or both undernourished and lacking in vitality.[1] The other children with physical defects suffered chiefly from bad tonsils and adenoids, defective vision, defective hearing, bad teeth, or, in a considerable number of cases, from a combination of these defects.

Obviously, then, a study of the Parental School boys shows that in their cases physical defects had not been discovered

[1] The following list covers the specific defects enumerated. This list shows only 85 children "lacking vitality," "undernourished," etc., but in

before they were brought into court, and that they represent numbers of children who escape the notice of the school doctor, or are not treated by the doctor, perhaps because their absence from school is not promptly followed up.

For example, a boy who was one of nine children and in the sixth grade was brought into court when thirteen, charged with violation of rules and misconduct on the street. He was found to be suffering from adenoids and enlarged tonsils and from partial deafness due to scarlet fever in infancy. He was also undernourished, as he had been getting his own meals at home. The boy's mother had supported the family by working away from home because the father was a worthless drunkard. The fact that the father had always been very abusive at home and was at one time arrested for beating and ill-treating his children is also significant. In this case the boy improved greatly during the four months that he spent at the Parental School, and was at work and "doing well" when visited by the investigator.

In many cases mental deficiency seems to be connected with truancy. For example, an Italian boy who was brought into court and committed to the Parental School at the age of thirteen seemed to be mentally deficient. For three years he

73 other cases this condition was combined with some specific defect. In the list given, the more general statements regarding physical condition are given only in the absence of specific defects.

Adenoids or bad tonsils or both	80
Poor vision (31), or defective hearing (5), or bad teeth (22)	58
Poor vision, hearing, or teeth combined, or combined with adenoids or tonsils	38
Lacking vitality, undernourished, or both	85
General physical condition bad	64
General physical condition fair	67
General physical condition good	64
Total number of boys examined	456

remained in the first grade of the public school, for two years in the second, and was promoted to the third only on account of his age and his size. Finally he was put in the subnormal room. He was not vicious, but was a constant source of annoyance. He interfered with the children about him, pulling their hair and pushing their things on to the floor. When reproved, he sat perfectly still "like a mule," the investigator was told. The only thing that he enjoyed was going about with his father, who was a peddler, and then describing all the things he had seen. When he stayed away from school he was believed to go with his father. He was very fat and overdeveloped, but his sight, speech, and hearing were perfect. During the year that he was twelve years old he was absent fifty times. When he was thirteen, he ran away from the subnormal room, was brought into court, and sent to the Chicago Parental School, where he remained for six months, until he was fourteen.

A somewhat similar case was that of a Polish boy who had been brought into court "off the streets"—aged thirteen and unable to read—and sent to the Parental School. Upon investigation it appeared that he had been in school for two and one-half months that year, but had been absent twenty-seven days during that time. The home, which was visited, was in charge of a sister, as the mother had been a paralyzed invalid for more than ten years. The father, a cement-layer, and the sister both said that the boy was "no good." They said that he had always been an abnormally bashful boy and was afraid to speak out loud for fear children would laugh at him. He had never been able to learn to read or to write. The father said that he hoped that the investigator had come to put the boy in some institution since he did not feel able to care for him. He has been in court twice as delinquent since leaving the Parental School: once for stealing old iron from the railroad, and once for "bumming" with a gang, one of whom carried

a loaded revolver. The boy, according to the father, "does not want to work, and no one would have him if he did."

There were also several cases of "repeaters," i.e., boys who were sent back to the Parental School for violation of parole, who seemed to be mentally defective boys. An Italian boy was described as "stupid, ill-tempered, and lazy." He "loved the streets" and used frequently to lie to his mother, telling her that there was no school or that the teacher had gone away. When twelve years old, he was still in the third grade of the public school. He was brought into court as a truant and a schoolroom incorrigible, and was committed to the Parental School. After eight months he was paroled, but violated his parole, and was returned within seven months. This time he remained three months, and was finally discharged because he had reached the age limit. In the year since his release he has held four different jobs as messenger boy.

A somewhat similar case was that of a Russian boy who was one of nine children. The family of eleven lived in a very crowded four-room apartment. The mother was untidy and shiftless, and the whole family nervous and excitable. This boy was brought into court when only nine years old for habitual truancy and violation of the rules. He rode about on wagons instead of coming to school; he fought his parents, and became hysterical when they attempted to control him. The mother said that it made him so nervous to climb the many stairs at the school that she was glad to have him sent away. He was committed to the Parental School, where he stayed five months. He has twice been released on parole, and twice returned.

A visiting teacher or social worker connected with the school, who could follow up the cases of absence like these, endeavor to find the right kind of treatment for the children, and persuade the parents to allow the necessary treatment, would greatly

add to the efficiency of the mental or physical examination and perhaps stimulate the school system to make better provision for the subnormal child.[1]

[1] In her report for 1913–14, p. 370, Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, superintendent, recommended among other things an increase in the number of subnormal rooms. "It is readily seen," her report says, "that forty-six rooms is not a sufficient number to provide for this class of pupils. We therefore urge that the number of divisions be materially increased."

CHAPTER XIII

TRUANCY IN RELATION TO DEPENDENCY AND DELINQUENCY

The preceding chapters have made it clear that the public school in the great American city of today touches every social problem—the non-supporting father, the tubercular mother, the degraded home, and all the harrassing difficulties that poverty brings into crowded houses in crowded city neighborhoods. Wherever conditions are unfavorable to child life, the schools suffer from non-attendance, truancy, and the violation of school rules, which come with the presence in school of children from extremely poor, undisciplined, or neglected homes. Large numbers of children in the poorer districts of the city are in need of medical attention, are insufficiently clad, and are improperly fed or underfed; and many of these will be troublesome in school. Many others suffer from various physical discomforts and find the prospect of drifting idly and listlessly about the streets and alleys, instead of being subjected to the discipline of school, a temptation impossible to resist. A study of the homes from which the Parental School boys come makes it clear that the conditions which are producing these truant and incorrigible boys are conditions which also make for dependency and delinquency.

The fact that truancy, dependency, and delinquency are the common results of such home conditions as have been described is suggested by the number of truant boys who, before being brought into court as truants, have already been in institutions for delinquent or dependent children. For example, as Table XXV shows, of the 473 boys brought into

court by the Department of Compulsory Education in a single year, 54 had been in court at an earlier date as dependent and 112 had been before the court as delinquent. Some of these cases were "continued" in order that a "truant" petition might be filed, because the boys were not seriously enough delinquent to make it wise to commit them to a delinquent institution or because there was no dependent institution to

TABLE XXV

NUMBER OF TRUANT BOYS BROUGHT INTO COURT DURING A SINGLE YEAR WITH PREVIOUS RECORDS OF DEPENDENCY OR DELINQUENCY, TOGETHER WITH DISPOSITION ON FIRST CHARGE*

Disposition	Dependent	Delinquent
Commitment:		
St. Mary's (Feehanville)	23	.....
Glenwood	7	.....
Other institutions for dependents	2	.....
John Worthy School	.....	13
St. Charles	.....	2
Paroled	14	52
Continued	3	39
Dismissed	2	3
No record of disposition	3	3
Total	54	112

*The data are for the year ending June 30, 1910, the only year for which data were collected.

which they could well be sent. In such cases the decision of the court always turns upon the best opportunity for giving the child proper treatment, without regard to the technical charge against him. The common expression used in the court record of such delinquent or dependent cases was: "The boy was found to have been very irregular in attendance at school, and his case was continued for a truant petition."

It will be recalled that the Parental School was not opened until January, 1902, two and one-half years after the establishment of the Juvenile Court. Until the Parental School was opened there was no special institutional provision for truants; and truant boys were therefore brought into court as delinquent, or in one or two instances as dependent, but no child was "found truant" by the court until a place of commitment had been opened. During the year 1899–1900, 57 boys charged with truancy were brought into court as delinquent; in 1900–1901, 33 delinquent boys and one dependent boy were charged either with truancy or incorrigibility in the schoolroom; and between July 1, 1901, and the opening of the Parental School in January, 1902, 10 delinquent boys were charged with truancy. The majority of these boys were paroled or committed to the John Worthy School, an institution for delinquent boys, but a few were sent to institutions for dependent children. During the first few years after the founding of the Parental School truant boys were still brought into court on dependent or delinquent petitions, but charged with the specific offense of "truancy."

In fact, if we accept the definition of a "dependent" child as it is found in the juvenile court law, it is clear that many of the truant boys might be correctly termed dependent. In the words of this statute, "dependent" and "neglected" are used synonymously, and a dependent or neglected child is "a child without proper parental care or guardianship, or a child who has a home which by reason of neglect, cruelty, or depravity, on the part of its parents, guardian, or any other person in whose care it may be, is an unfit place for such a child." The tables appearing in chap. x relating to the truant boys who have been committed show how frequently such conditions are found in the homes of the boys who are sent to the Parental School as truants. Occasionally it happens that a boy is transferred directly from the Parental School to some dependent or delinquent institution,

or that truant boys who are on parole are sent to some other institution upon violation of their paroles instead of being returned to the Parental School.

The inter-relation of truancy, delinquency, and dependency is seen in those cases in which conditions in the home have made the development of right-conduct on the part of the children extremely difficult. In the case, for example, of one boy who was brought into court at the age of eleven, charged with truancy and violation of the rules and sent to the Parental School, the records showed that he had been brought to court when he was only three years old on a dependent charge. Conditions in the home were terrible: there were nine children; the father had deserted the family more than once; the older brothers were "loafers"; an older sister had been sent to an institution for delinquent girls; the home was filthy, and the whole family drank and fought among themselves. The mother was described by one school principal as a "terrible woman who was known to have used a knife on someone who visited the family." Less than two years after the boy had been brought to court for truancy, he was brought in as delinquent on the charge of stealing, and only a year later he was in court again on the same charge. At the time this inquiry was made the boy was doing fairly well at school, was in the fifth grade and attending school regularly; but there is very slight chance of a good life for a boy who is left in such a home.

In another family from which two boys were sent to the Parental School, both parents were hard drinkers and were cruel to their children. Later the mother died; the father, a cripple, deserted, and the home was broken up. The youngest boy was brought into court when he was twelve years old and in the second grade, and was sent to the Parental School. Before this time he had been in court twice as a dependent, had been sent twice to the County Hospital for treatment, and was once committed to an institution for dependent children.

After nine months at the Parental School, it was thought best to transfer him to the school for the feeble-minded, so he escaped delinquency by being committed to that institution.

In another case a boy of thirteen who was supposedly attending the third grade in school was brought to court for persistent truancy and sent to the Parental School. The boy's early history threw a great deal of light on his conduct. He was the youngest of six children. The mother died when he was very small; and the father, an inefficient workman, earned very low wages, drank heavily, and took no care of the children. The youngest boy was first brought into court when he was ten years old as a dependent child without proper home care, and was sent to an institution for dependent children. Two years later he was brought into court as a delinquent and paroled; but within a few months he was brought in again as a dependent and placed under the care of a probation officer. By this time he was thirteen and he was soon sent to the Parental School. Not long after being paroled from the Parental School he was brought in again as delinquent for stealing coal from the tracks and money from stores, and was sent to an institution for delinquent boys, where he was at the time of our inquiry.

One boy who had been committed to a dependent institution three years before he was sent to the Parental School had a younger brother who was for several years in an institution for dependent children. The father died of tuberculosis, and the mother drank and was immoral. The family lived for some time in one room, very dirty and poorly furnished, in a very dirty rear tenement. At the age of thirteen the older boy was brought to court by the Department of Compulsory Education and sent to the Parental School. He had reached the fourth grade in school, his deportment was good, and he was doing fairly well with his studies, but he was staying away from school—a dangerous practice in demoralizing surroundings. He was kept in the Parental School only three months; but

after he was paroled, conditions at home were so bad that there was no chance of improvement and a few weeks later he was returned to the Parental School for violation of his parole and was kept there until he was fourteen. Six months after his release, he was brought into court for refusing to work and for not staying at home. The case was continued, but two months later when he was charged with forging a check for $5 he was sent to the John Worthy School, where he stayed for seven months. It is interesting to note that although the mother attributes the boy's delinquency to the fact that she had to work and could not watch him, the truant officer states emphatically that the boy had no chance with an immoral, drinking mother and a degraded home.

In a large number of other cases in which the child escaped being brought into court as dependent, he came from a miserable and degraded home, where he was neglected in many ways. One of the first evidences of this neglect was his irregularity or bad conduct at school. But the appearance in court for truancy is followed later by dependency or delinquency.

For example, John ——— was brought into court both for truancy and violation of school rules at the age of eleven, when he was in the second grade at school. The boy was the fifth child in a family of seven children, of whom the eldest was twenty, the youngest four. The father was a carpenter and belonged to the union, but was a drunken loafer and gambler who could not support his family. He was always out of a job, sent his little girls to saloons for whiskey, beat his wife and abused her so that she said she "would rather be beaten than hear him talk to her." He had deserted more than once and had been several times before the court for non-support. A brother older than John, who had been at the Chicago Parental School, was like the father: he loafed, smoked, and ill-treated his mother. He was known in the neighborhood as "a little tough." Various social agencies were interested in the family;

and the younger boy, who was always liked by the teacher and the pupils but who had a bad temper and was led by his older brothers, was finally sent to the Chicago Parental School to get him away from home conditions. The mother was interviewed at a store where she was working. She was interested in the children and wished something could be done to make the fifteen-year-old boy go to school. Although, when interviewed, she had a separate maintenance, she was much concerned about getting rid of her "old man," and she said she wished she "could kill him off."

Equally dependent were two brothers sent to the Parental School because of truancy, due to neglect in the home: John and Joseph A———, two illiterate Polish boys, were brought into court at the age of thirteen and eleven respectively. The court record showed that the boys had been extremely irregular in attendance and that John, the elder, who was in the second grade, had attended school only occasionally during the previous year. Joseph, the younger, who was in the first grade, had been absent oftener than he had been present. The principal's report said that the father drank and that the mother was insane, although she had not been removed from the home. When the family was visited, the mother and two boys were found at home quarreling. The home was a very dirty, rear tenement, reached through a long and narrow passageway between the buildings. The neighborhood was dismal, dirty, partly unpaved, deserted, and there was a stone-cutting establishment near with yards covering several blocks. The woman, who was scolding the children because there was no food, or wood, or coal, cried and put her hands on the cold stove. Both boys made fun of her, saying "the old woman hadn't any sense." The older boy could write nothing except his name; the younger then in a parochial school would not tell the grade. Both the boys and the mother were cases for institutional care. The father drank and neglected them all.

There are many cases of boys who have "brought themselves up," as one deserted mother expressed it. A little Italian boy, whose mother was dead and father deserted, was supported by an older brother who earned enough to pay their board with an aunt. She had nine children of her own to look after and said she really had not the time to see that this boy went to school, for getting him to school had come to mean "chasing him off the streets and away from the alleys." Another motherless truant boy had a father with a criminal record who had deserted his children, an older sister who was leading an immoral life, and an older brother who had been in the State Reform School at Pontiac, but who was the sole guardian and support of his little brother. When the boy was eleven years old he was brought in on a truancy charge and sent to the Parental School, where he was kept for nine months. His school reports showed an improvement after his return, and his brother said that, although he was "wild and crazy" before going, he came back steadied and much improved physically. The brothers later lived in a rooming-house in the heart of the vice district and worked as teamsters in a coal yard directly back of a saloon. The woman in charge of the rooming-house drank, but the boys seemed to have escaped contamination. In the case of another boy the father was thoroughly worthless and made the mother go out to work; the mother finally got a divorce and married again, but the step-father was no better, and the mother was obliged to go out washing much of the time. This boy spent a year and a half in an orphan asylum at one time, but was attending the public school when he was brought into court and sent to the Parental School. He was then ten years old and in the third grade at school, and was described as "dirty, dull, and ill-tempered," although apparently in good physical condition.

Another boy, who was brought to court as a truant and schoolroom incorrigible, was the youngest of eight children with

a mother who drank heavily and who had led all the seven older children into bad habits. This boy was said not to be "adapted for school work," but after five months at the Parental School he returned, not to his own degraded home, but to a kind and competent aunt who was able to provide for him and to protect him.

The dependent cases that have been given are some of them also cases in which the boy became delinquent. Many similar cases might be discussed, but it seems scarcely necessary to illustrate so obvious a fact as the close connection between delinquency and truancy when truancy is the direct outcome of a bad home or of neighborhood conditions. The undisciplined and undirected boy who plays truant to go to nickel shows and who "chases the streets" soon gets in with the gang that lies in wait like Satan himself in districts where children are so numerous and means of recreation so limited; the loafing on the streets leads to genuine marauding expeditions, and the boy is soon in court again and is technically no longer truant but has become delinquent.

In the case of an Italian boy, one of six children, most of whom were born in Italy, the father was a laborer, frequently out of work, and the mother a "pants finisher" who worked very hard to earn enough for food. The family lived in three very dirty rooms in a miserably dilapidated rear tenement with steep dark stairways. The street on which they lived was near the river; the houses were tumble-down, and there were in the neighborhood many saloons and cheap places of amusement. This boy got in with some bad boys when he was very small, and was brought to court as delinquent when he was only seven. His parents were unable to get him away from bad company although they said that they punished him most severely! When he was thirteen years old and in the fourth grade in the public school, he was finally brought to court as an habitual truant and sent to the Parental School. He was there five months, and the mother thought him greatly improved; but

he was soon in court again, this time for stealing, and was sent to the John Worthy School.

An interesting case is that of a boy who was a younger child in a family of seven children whose father was dead and whose mother was immoral. The family lived in a rear basement apartment, dark, dirty, and poorly furnished, in a poor neighborhood near the railroad tracks. The children were greatly neglected, and one of the sisters was sent to an institution for delinquent girls. This boy was first brought into court when he was twelve years old, charged with stealing junk from stores. He was also attending school very irregularly, and a few months later he was brought into court again as an habitual truant and sent to the Parental School, where he remained fourteen months. The boy enjoyed the military drill and liked the school so much that he asked to be sent back after he left. Soon after he was fourteen and too old to go back to the Parental School, he was brought into court as delinquent, charged with incorrigibility and running away from home, and was sent to the John Worthy School. He was one of a large number of boys from poor and neglected homes who have their first experience of a disciplined, well-ordered life in the Parental School, and many of them respond to its influence as this boy did, and would like to stay.

In one home which had been visited by the truant officer ten times within two years, the boy who was truant was the youngest of five children and seemed always to have been in poor physical condition. The home was very poor, the father a day laborer, frequently out of work, and the mother dead. The boy had no home care or training. He was said by the principal to be one of the "worst types of confirmed truants drifting into crime." When he was brought in off the streets, he stayed only until recess. When he was eleven years old and in the third grade of the public school, he was brought into court as an habitual truant and sent to the Parental School.

After he had been there five months, he was sent home on parole, but was returned a month later and was kept four months longer. His older sister, who is a very indifferent guardian, said that the boy "was better" for a month after his return, but soon got in trouble again, was brought into court as delinquent, and was later sent to the John Worthy School.

In one family from which two boys were brought into court, the father, a brutal, immoral man, deserted the family and went off with a disreputable woman. The mother, who had obtained a divorce from her husband, did scrubbing and washing away from home. She was devoted to the two sons, but weak, over-indulgent, and unable to control them; she used to try to bribe the boys to go to school, but they took her money and played truant. The older boy has been in Glenwood as a dependent, in the John Worthy School as a delinquent, and was afterward returned to court on a delinquent charge. When the younger boy was eleven years old and only in the third grade at school, he was brought into court for habitual truancy; he was said to be a cigarette fiend, congenitally defective, and morally weak. The case was continued, and four months later he was committed to the Chicago Parental School. He was later transferred to an institution for dependent boys.

This series of illustrative cases might be almost indefinitely prolonged. A sufficient number of examples has, however, been given to emphasize the fact that conditions in the home that lead to neglect of the children, whether the causes of neglect be immorality, drunkenness, incompetence, ignorance, or extreme poverty, are likely to lead to interference by the state with parental authority. Whether the child is declared truant, dependent, or delinquent is largely a matter of accident. In any event, the child becomes the ward of the state, and parental control over the child is supplemented or superseded as the child's needs may dictate.

CHAPTER XIV

ENFORCEMENT OF THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION LAW IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF CHICAGO

It has been pointed out in earlier chapters that the compulsory school law has laid on the parent or guardian of any child within certain prescribed ages the duty of securing the child's attendance at school; upon the educational authorities has been laid the duty of making effective and vigilant use of the power to prosecute those parents who refuse to comply with the requirements.

The necessity for such drastic treatment arises under several different sets of conditions. It should be noted that to assure to all children seven or nine years of schooling is to set a minimum standard of care and education which lays a heavy burden upon families that are poor. A sympathetic understanding of this fact should be shared by all school authorities and judges whose duty it becomes to enforce the law. The poorest parents are often those who are most solicitous for the welfare of their children, but so beset and burdened are they with the hard struggle for life that they see no way of providing for the younger children except to sacrifice the older ones.

The difficulty is of course greatly enhanced when ignorance or indifference is added to poverty. This is found in many instances where the parents have had no reason to appreciate the importance of the child's schooling. Coming, as so many of them do, from the rural districts of our own or of other countries, they have had no experience that will interpret to them the changed demand of the modern industrial community on the child. They, like their fathers and their forefathers, have expected their children to work hard about the house or

farm during childhood and to begin wage-earning life at a very early age, and many of them feel wronged if they are prevented from calling upon their children at an early age to share the burdens of family support. It is, therefore, unreasonable to expect parents to yield at once and without objection to the requirements of the compulsory school law. On this account every opportunity must be used to make known to them their duty under the law, to help them understand the reason for laying the duty upon them, and, where possible, to secure their sympathy and co-operation. The very great difference between the number of parents on whom warning notices must be served, and of those for whom prosecution is found necessary, is an indication of the readiness with which most parents are willing to observe the law when they understand it. Whatever the deficiencies in the system at the present time, however, and whatever the hardships to the parent, the demand of the state is an inexorable one, and stringent enforcement of the statute should be the rule. The state should, in fact, be relentless in demanding that the child's future must not be jeopardized.

When the family is not only poor and unintelligent but irregular in its habits, when there is drunkenness or any other demoralizing influence at work in the home, severer treatment than commitment to the Parental School will be found necessary in order to secure for the child that minimum of education which the state has said he must have. In such cases, after being duly warned, the parent himself becomes the object of prosecution. In 1913–14, for example, it was found necessary to prosecute 67 parents who had with 1,169 others been duly warned, but, unlike the others, had failed to heed the warning. Table XXVI shows the number of warning notices served and of prosecutions carried through by the Department of Compulsory Education from 1900 to 1914.

It is interesting to note the great increase in the number of prosecutions and of warning notices for three years after 1903,

when the law was amended. For the next year there was a marked drop in both warnings and prosecutions, and, although the law was again radically amended in 1907, there was no striking change as a result. It is, in fact, impossible to discover from these figures evidence of any policy directing the use either of

TABLE XXVI

NUMBER OF WARNING NOTICES AND PROSECUTIONS, 1900–1914

Year Ending June 30	Warning Notices	Prosecutions*
1900	12	31
1901	†	17
1902	†	169
1903	479	204
1904	1,060	307
1905	4,283	451
1906	2,820	702
1907	2,219	120
1908	1,646	178
1909	1,437	108
1910	1,713	138
1911	1,884	105
1912	1,533	118
1913	1,611	129
1914	1,236	67
Total	21,933	2,844

* Up to the year 1903–4 these figures seem to include prosecutions of boys in the Juvenile Court.

† Figures not given in published reports.

warning notices or of prosecutions. The superintendent explains the decrease in 1914 as compared with 1913 as evidencing "public respect for the enforced law on school attendance and the knowledge that truant officers' warnings must be heeded."[1] Such a sudden access of public respect for the law would be more easily understood if the figures for the four pre-

[1] *Sixtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago* (1913–14), p. 407, "Report of the Superintendent of Compulsory Education."

ceding years had indicated that such a respect was growing and might suddenly expand, but the figures go up and then down in a way that cannot be easily or satisfactorily accounted for. Unfortunately, the results of the prosecutions are not known. No figures are published in the annual reports of the Board of Education to show what disposition was made of their cases. It is, therefore, impossible to tell how many parents were fined, or how many were imprisoned or discharged. No conclusions can be drawn therefore as to what had or what had not proved to be effective treatment of such cases.

Attention has been called above to the lack of other machinery for interpreting the attitude of the community effectively to the parent. Prosecution followed by a fine is a harsh method of interpretation, but it is one whose message can hardly be misunderstood. The imposition of a fine results in the placing of a money estimate upon the child's attendance. This at least every parent can understand; and if anyone has been tempted to allow his child to leave school for the sake of the child's earnings, he can measure the relative advantage of school attendance without wages and of absence with the risk of being fined. Moreover, as many of these parents are very poor, the fine is sometimes not paid, but is "laid out" in the bridewell or the county jail at the rate of fifty cents a day. This means the forfeiture of the man's wages, as well as detention and separation from his family. Not only the family, but the entire neighborhood is thus impressed with the concern of the state for the education even of the poorest child.

The prosecutions, as has been said, are, in Chicago, instituted in the Municipal Court, and, since April 3, 1911, in that branch of the Municipal Court known as the Court of Domestic Relations. The case for the prosecution is presented by a representative of the Department of Compulsory Education, and testimony is offered by the principal or teacher from the school attended by the child. The accused has, of course,

a right to trial by jury, but is usually willing to waive jury trial and to leave the finding to the judge. The parents are often represented by counsel, but the trial is quite informal, and the decision really turns upon the question of adequate warning and on the honest effort of the parent to secure the child's attendance. It is, of course, usually the father who is the defendant in these prosecutions. Out of 58 cases brought into the Court of Domestic Relations during the period for which we have records only 5 were against guardians other than the father; 4 of these were against the mother, and 1 against the brother of the child.

No figures are available showing the results of the prosecutions in the Municipal Court except for a single year, April 3, 1911, to March 31, 1912, the first year of the Court of Domestic Relations. During that year 124 persons were brought in and 74 of them were fined.[1] In the other 50 cases no fine was imposed. In some instances where no fine is imposed, the case is "continued" for two weeks or a month, so that the parents may show whether they can and will undertake to send the child to school; and sometimes when the fine is imposed, the court will suspend its collection and then under form of dismissal remit the fine because of improved attendance on the part of the child. By both of these devices the family is really placed on probation.

It does not appear that any more definite policy characterizes the treatment of these cases by the court than their treatment by the Department of Compulsory Education. As the actions which have been taken are not available in published

[1] The fine for failing to secure attendance, as has been said, may be anything between $5 and $20, with or without costs, which amount generally to about $8.50. The amount most commonly imposed is $5 without costs. Between July 1, 1911, and June 30, 1912, 45 persons were fined. Of these, 36 were fined $5 without costs, seven were fined $5 with costs, one $10 without, and one $10 with costs. Five "laid out" their fines in in the House of Correction, and three in the county jail.

reports, figures were obtained from the records, by which a comparison of the treatment of cases during the months April, May, and June, 1911, could be made with the corresponding months of the following year, when there had been a change in the personnel of the court. Under the earlier administration 47 out of 71 cases, or 2 out of 3, were fined, while during the second period only 21 out of the same number, or less than 1 in 3, were fined, and the other 50 escaped punishment altogether. During the four years following the opening of the court, five different judges had general assignments to this court,[1] and there was no reason to hope for an agreement among them with reference to the seriousness of this particular responsibility. It is, in fact, inevitable that there should be a difference in policy on the part of the judges, since the whole question of the importance of the child's right to be in school every half-day the school is open is still so lightly regarded by many well-meaning people in the community. To the judge, the ancient parental right to determine for the child must still seem very important, and the case for intervention on the part of the community would have to be made very clear. Not until the Court of Domestic Relations has been thoroughly socialized, and is presided over only by men who can and will inform themselves with regard to the nature of the pressing social problems with which they deal, can the court become an effective instrument for social treatment.

Attention is called in the preceding chapter to the fact that, although the parental school law applies to girls as well as to boys, no provision has been made at the Parental School for girls. It was also pointed out that very few girls have been brought into the Juvenile Court as truants—37 girls out of a total of 5,659 children. A very considerable number of parents are, however, disciplined in the Municipal Court for allowing their daughters to remain out of school. Out of 58 compulsory

[1] Beside brief special and vacation assignments.

education cases brought in during the spring of 1911, 20 were cases in which girls had remained out of school, while out of 90 cases for which the facts were available in 1912–13, 42, or about 50 per cent, were cases of girl truants. Attention might be called here again to the fact that whereas the truant boy is a source of disturbance, attracting notice on the street and more or less getting himself into trouble, the non-attending girl usually is helping in her father's shop, taking care of the baby, caring for her sick mother, or doing some other household task. One thirteen-year-old girl, for example, whose father, an Italian, had a fruit and cigar store, lost sixty-six days during one school year and had been at school only a day and a half prior to November 13, of the following year. The mother was sick, and the girl was kept out of school to help in the store and about the home. Another thirteen-year-old Italian girl, who was only in the second grade, had been kept at home because the mother "took in" several men boarders; there were three or four younger children, and she was needed to help at home.

When the reasons for keeping the children at home are examined, they explain the fact, too, that the girls for whose absence parents are brought into the Municipal Court are older than the boys. Out of 20 girls whose parents were prosecuted, 13 were twelve or older, while only 13 out of 38 boys were twelve or over. In a considerable number of cases the girl's absence means that she is being used at home; the boy's more often indicates a family life too irregular and careless to get the younger children ready for school, since the older boy is more likely to be brought into the Juvenile Court and sent to the Parental School.

As has been said, some of the parents are merely ignorant and use their children in household tasks or send them out to work unnecessarily; but there are some homes where the poverty is great and the mother goes out to work, so that the child, sometimes a girl, sometimes a boy, stays at home to take the mother's

place. For example, Helen, who was twelve years old, was absent sixty-two half-days between September and February. Her father was ill and unable to work. The mother went out washing four days a week and kept Helen at home to care for the baby. The statement made by the mother in court was, that she could make no other arrangement for the baby, and "anyway she did not have time to comb the girl's hair and get her ready for school."

There are also families in which the mother is dead and the father has failed to make provision for a housekeeper, and the children are consequently neglected and forlorn. For example, the wife of Mr. H——— died, leaving three children, a girl who did the housework in the morning before going to her job in a tobacco factory, a fourteen-year-old boy, and a nine-year-old boy, both of whom were irregular in attendance. The older boy was mischievous, but the younger was not at all troublesome, merely neglected. The father was away all day long, and there was no one to look after the boys or to help them as they came or went. The mother of another family had died the year before, leaving three boys; the oldest did what housekeeping there was done, but it is not surprising that all three were irregular in their attendance and came to school, when they did come, uncombed and neglected. The father told the court that he was very strict but that the boys stayed away without his knowledge. He expected to be less busy in the future and would see that they attended regularly. Evidently such families need many services other than those connected with prosecution. The thing lacking in this one was a kind woman's care, and paying a fine or serving a term in the bridewell will hardly secure that.

There are other cases of a more difficult kind, in which the father, or perhaps the mother, drinks, or where the mother is of questionable morality; where the home is filthy, and the children really neglected. Such a case was that of two Polish

boys, thirteen and fourteen years old, neither of whom could read or write, and both of whom had been for a long time very irregular in school attendance. The mother, who was a widow, drank constantly, and a sixteen-year-old girl was the sole support of the family. The judge sent the mother to the bridewell for thirty days. In such cases, the punishment and discipline of the parents may perhaps have a wholesome effect. Such cases should, however, be followed by further supervision of the children. In other words, we find, as we should expect, that the families that are brought into court are representatives of the lowest groups of homes from which come the non-attending children whose absences are studied in other chapters. For some of these children this method of treatment seems quite inadequate.

Reference was made in an earlier chapter to the statute providing a penalty for such conduct on the part of parents or guardians as is likely to contribute to the dependency or to the delinquency of children.[1] Prosecution under this statute is usually an item in a definite plan for the treatment of a child who has been held dependent or delinquent, as the

[1] "Any parent, legal guardian or person having the custody of a male under the age of 17 years or of a female under the age of 18 years, who shall knowingly or wilfully cause, aid or encourage such person to be or to become a dependent and neglected child . . . . or . . . . do acts which directly tend to render any such child so dependent and neglected, or who shall knowingly or wilfully fail to do that which will directly tend to prevent such state of dependency and neglect shall be deemed guilty of the crime of contributing to the dependency and neglect of children. . . . .

"Any person who shall knowingly or wilfully cause, aid or encourage any male under the age of seventeen (17) years or any female under the age of eighteen (18) years to be or to become a delinquent child . . . . or . . . . do acts which will directly tend to render any such child so and who when able to do so, shall wilfully neglect to do that which will directly tend to prevent such state of delinquency shall be deemed guilty of the crime of contributing to the delinquency of children."—*Laws of Illinois*, 1915, pp. 368–69.

case may be, by the Juvenile Court. In the same way, the prosecution of these "truant" parents may be required in the interest of the child, and where necessary should be resorted to vigorously. But this, too, should be an item in a program of treatment for the child which would include all those devices intended for the rehabilitation of the home as well as this special device for disciplining the parent. Unconscious recognition of this need is shown in occasional cases in which the Department of Compulsory Education uses the court for exactly this purpose and attempts to secure through punishment for non-attendance such discipline as will result in the better care of the children and remove the causes of non-attendance. In one home, for example, the mother was ill, the children neglected and filthy, and their attendance irregular. Evidently, the whole household had to be raised to a cleaner and better standard, and the judge, while he imposed a fine on the father, also directed that a probation officer be called upon to aid in the supervision of the family life.

Cases of this character suggest, again, interesting questions of method and jurisdiction. The school should, of course, and when adequately equipped will, perform for all children of compulsory school age the service of discovering conditions hostile to their well-being. Through the school nurse and the medical inspector, serious conditions of neglect will be revealed. The discovery is, however, of little value unless followed by adequate treatment of those conditions. Moreover, in many cases, the conditions may be below any possible "minimum of child care" and may yet not manifest themselves in ways discoverable by the physician. For such cases there is needed the trained eye of the person skilled in the care of children and familiar with other symptoms of neglect. And, in fact, in all cases, the care of the person skilled in the art of helping families to lift themselves out of the mire of irregular, shiftless, or dissolute living is absolutely essential. Resort to discipline and

compulsion must sometimes be necessary, and there should be fairly definite standards of cleanliness and regularity below which no family should be allowed to remain. If the final action in such cases could be to leave the family under sympathetic probationary care, such action might more frequently secure for the children that measure of nurture described by the Juvenile Court law as "proper parental care."

CHAPTER XV

THE SCHOOL CENSUS AS A MEANS OF ENFORCING THE ATTENDANCE LAW

In a recent report on *Compulsory School Attendance*, by the United States Bureau of Education, attention is called to the use of the school census as a means of enforcing the school attendance provisions of the various school laws. According to the report:

> To secure the enrolment of pupils, several factors are necessary, the most important of which is a complete census of all children of compulsory school age. . . . . That an annual census is necessary to secure enrolment is obvious. Every year children move from one district to another, and others have reached the compulsory age . . . . ; many immigrant children may have arrived who would not be discovered by the truant officer without a census list. If a school census has been taken, the teachers of the public, private and parochial schools can promptly check off those not enrolled during the first few weeks of the school term. The truant officers can then easily locate them and secure their attendance.[1]

Unfortunately, however, Illinois is one of those states in which the statute makes no provision for the taking of a school census as a means of enforcing the school attendance requirement. The purpose of the school census, in Illinois as in many other states where a census is required, is to secure the enumeration of the minor population as a basis for the distribution of the state or county school fund. It may, indeed, be said that the Illinois statute provides only indirectly for a school census.

[1] U.S. Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1914, No. 2, *Compulsory School Attendance*, by W. S. Deffenbaugh, Anna Tolman Smith, W. Carson Ryan, Jr., and William H. Hand. Washington, 1914. See especially pp. 12–14.

Thus the Illinois school law declares that the common school fund of the state is to be distributed among the various counties "in proportion to the number of persons in each county under the age of twenty-one years as ascertained from the next preceding state or federal census." The distribution within the county, however, is made on the basis of a local enumeration.[1] The various school districts, therefore, find it necessary to take a school census, that is, a census of minor population, as a basis for claiming a proper share of the common school fund within the county. An additional reason for an enumeration is that the statistical material necessary for the reports of the state superintendent of public instruction can be obtained only in this way. The state superintendent is required by statute to report to the governor before each regular session of the legislature (i.e., biennially) concerning the "condition of the schools in the several counties of the state . . . . the number of persons in each county under twenty-one years of age and the number of persons between the ages of twelve and twenty-one unable to read and write," together with various other items of information.

The Chicago school census seems to be taken biennially because, although an annual enumeration would perhaps result in Chicago's securing a larger share of the fund assigned to Cook County since the school population is probably increasing

[1] See *Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, sec. 215: "The county superintendent of schools shall apportion and distribute, under rules and regulations prescribed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the principal of the county fund to the townships and parts of townships in his county, according to the number of persons under twenty-one years of age returned to him. The principal of the county fund so distributed shall be added to the principal of the township fund of the townships and parts of townships in his county. The interests, rents, issues, and profits arising and accruing from the principal of the county fund shall be distributed to the townships and parts of townships in his county, as required by the provisions of this Act."

with greater rapidity in Chicago than in other parts of the county, the Board of Education has decided that the expense of taking the census is so great that it is better to do without the increased share of the fund than to bear the cost of an annual enumeration, and the taking of a biennial census meets the requirement of the state law regarding the statistics to be sent to the state superintendent of public instruction for his biennial report.

The Illinois law thus represents a view of the school census that is now coming to be regarded as obsolete. It is no longer believed that there should be a school census merely to secure an equitable distribution of school funds or to furnish crude statistics to a state superintendent who has little, if any, power to prevent the unsatisfactory conditions that might be revealed by the statistics. On the contrary, the school census is regarded as a most important means of securing the thorough enforcement of a compulsory attendance statute. In a chapter dealing with the subject of compulsory attendance in the annual report for 1912, the New York State Department of Education emphasized the importance of a school census:

> Our annual school census at present forms the basis of the enforcement of child labor and attendance laws, and serves this end only; yet the purpose sought is so important and far reaching as to make the taking of the census one of the most important duties devolving upon school authorities, because a thorough enforcement of these laws is necessarily dependent upon accurate and reliable census information. However, we are not proud of the care and interest manifested on the part of the authorities in taking school censuses. Reliable census information is more often than otherwise lacking in cities and villages and even in rural communities and hamlets where the census may be taken easily and with small expense. All this is true, notwithstanding the fact that the law specifically provides for the taking of the census and the filing of a copy of same in school records available for the use of teachers, attendance officers, inspectors and all others having a right to such information.

A similar passage from the 1910 report of the Massachusetts Board of Education confirms the view of the school census found in the New York report:

In more populous centers school attendance officers are greatly handicapped by the absence of reliable information regarding the children on whom school attendance is obligatory. An annual census is required in the towns and cities of Massachusetts, but this census is not taken in such a way as to furnish information which attendance officers can use. Students of school administration are agreed that in more populous areas some form of permanent registration of all children who come under the school attendance laws [and it is to be remembered, that in some cases this extends to the age of eighteen in Massachusetts] should be provided. In connection with the taking of the annual school census it would be possible to provide a card record giving age, parentage and other data of importance, which card record could after comparison with the registration of the school, become the basis on which attendance officers could investigate illegal absence.

The suggestion made in the foregoing paragraphs that, to be thoroughly effective as a means of enforcing the compulsory law, the old-fashioned annual or biennial school census must be superseded by a permanent census department has already been adopted for the larger cities in the state of New York. The modern view is that registration instead of enumeration is needed if the desired results are to be secured. In 1909 the bill creating a permanent census bureau in every city of the first class passed the New York state legislature, and although the machinery for the registration system is still in process of being perfected, the immense service that could be rendered by such a permanent census system was promptly demonstrated.[1]

[1] In 1914 by an amendment to the Greater New York charter some radical changes were made in the organization of the permanent census board in New York City, and the present Bureau of Compulsory Education, School Census and Child Welfare was made possible. Further experimentation will undoubtedly be needed before the permanent census system is perfected, but that such experimentation will result in a vastly improved

How far Illinois has lagged behind in this matter is indicated by the fact that the city of Chicago does not have even an annual census, and that the biennial census is taken in the spring at a time when little service can be rendered by returning children to school. In the year 1910 the taking of the school census was turned over to the Department of Compulsory Education, and the following discussion of the Chicago school

school attendance cannot be doubted. In fact, within two years after the passage of the permanent census law of 1909, the Department of Education of the state of New York called attention to the substantial results that had already been accomplished. Thus the annual report for 1911 states that the permanent census bureaus were "still in a tentative condition, though much progress has been made toward perfecting their organization. The work, however, has apparently progressed slowly because the lines upon which the bureaus are being organized and operated are entirely and necessarily new. Such a bureau had never before been established in any American city and, therefore, the setting up of the bureau machinery called for initiative, sound judgment, special aptitude and ability on the part of persons placed in charge of the work. . . . . Still, even at this early day, proof is not lacking of their substantial value in connection with the enforcement of attendance laws as indicated by figures submitted in this report.

"The following data are significant. In the city of Rochester, operations of the bureau brought to light 518 children unlawfully out of school. These were reported to the attendance division of the city for investigation and either each child was placed in school or the case otherwise lawfully disposed of.

"In the city of Buffalo, 6,318 children were found unlawfully out of school. All of these cases were reported to the attendance division and each properly investigated and satisfactorily disposed of.

"In the city of New York, 23,241 children were found unlawfully out of school by the census dragnet, while the initial enumeration of the city, for reasons mentioned in a previous report, is not yet entirely completed. To date, 17,231 of these cases have been investigated by the city's attendance division and properly disposed of. The others will receive attention as rapidly as may be.

"The machinery of the attendance and child labor laws has been in operation in these three cities for over sixteen years, and with much success, yet the fact that the effort of the bureau located over 30,000 children unlawfully out of school is proof beyond question of the value of these bureaus as a very material aid in the enforcement of attendance laws."—*Eighth Annual Report of the New York State Department of Education* (1912), pp. 325–26.

census relates only to the enumerations that have been made under the auspices of that department.

With regard to the present methods of taking the Chicago school census, the first question to be raised is the advisability of taking the census at the close of the school year in May or June. It does not appear that this time is selected because of any legal requirement as to the collection of statistics. And if a school census is to be a means of discovering children who have slipped out of school or children who are trying to slip out of school, it should be taken in the early part of the school year, preferably in September and certainly not later than October. Children who were then discovered out of school could be placed in school and kept there under the supervision of the truant officers presumably for the entire school year. It is of little value to discover in May that children are unenrolled, to enter them in school for the few remaining weeks of the school year, and then to give them the opportunity to lose themselves again before the reopening of the schools in the fall. To secure its share of the county fund, the school district must send in its data as to the minor population and school enrolment before the first of July. The theory underlying the spring enumeration may be that the postponement is likely to mean larger returns and therefore a larger share of the appropriation.[1]

[1] Since the writing of this chapter the school census of 1916 has been taken, but although this census was taken in the last week of March, somewhat earlier than usual, the charge was made in the Chicago newspapers that the change in the time of taking the census was not a matter of educational policy but was due to a desire to give the city administration a large number of "jobs" to dispose of at a time when they might be used to influence the spring elections in favor of the administration candidates. This charge was denied by the Superintendent of Compulsory Education who nevertheless persistently refused to publish the names of persons appointed to positions as enumerators. There is, of course, every reason why the census enumerators and supervisors should all be selected by civil-service methods.

The objection is raised that too many families have not returned to the city in September to make this a desirable month for enumeration, but it may be pointed out that only a very small proportion of the child population of Chicago belongs to the fortunate class that migrates from the city in the summer and remains away through September. This may be a conspicuous portion of the population, but it is not a large portion.

But the astonishing fact about the Chicago school census is that it seems to be useless as a means of discovering either unenrolled children or children unlawfully absent from school. In fact, according to the tables that are published in the school census for 1910, for 1912, and for 1914, there is apparently no difference between the total number of children in Chicago between seven and fourteen years of age and the number of children in that age group who are enrolled in school. For example, the total number of children between seven and fourteen attending school in 1914 is said to be 285,878; the total population between seven and fourteen is 285,878. Table XXVII compiled from the three school census reports that have been issued by the Department of Compulsory Education seems to indicate that the total enrolment corresponds exactly with the total minor population.

TABLE XXVII

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BETWEEN SEVEN AND FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND TOTAL POPULATION OF CHICAGO BETWEEN SEVEN AND FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE

(Compiled from the School Census Reports for 1910, 1912, and 1914)

YEAR	ATTENDING SCHOOL		NOT IN SCHOOL FOR 30 CONSECUTIVE DAYS	TOTAL ATTENDING SCHOOL	TOTAL POPULATION OF CHICAGO BETWEEN 7 AND 14
	Public	Private			
1910.....	186,344	61,444	3,768	251,556	251,556
1912.....	187,120	68,911	2,419	258,450	258,450
1914.....	210,227	74,141	1,510	285,878	285,878

The statement that the total school enrolment and the total minor population seem to correspond exactly is made on the assumption that children who are classified as "not in school for thirty consecutive days" are enrolled children. The tables given in the school census do not include such classes as "number of children unenrolled" or "number of children unlawfully absent from school." Nor does there seem to be any place in the classification for the children who are not attending school because of mental and physical incapacity, although it is unnecessary to point out that there are a considerable number of such children in Chicago. These children, like the unenrolled children that are found, must be included under the heading "not in school for 30 days" in spite of the fact that they are not in school at all.

In the text accompanying the tables in the last school census, that of 1914, there is to be found under the heading "Attendance Conditions" the following statement which seems to be the only explanation of what is meant by the classification "not in school for thirty consecutive days":

> There are 285,878 children of compulsory attendance age (between seven and fourteen years) in the city. . . . . Of this number only 1,510 were absent from school thirty consecutive days preceding May 4, 1914. Investigation by truant officers (who followed up the work of the enumerators to co-operate for the promotion of attendance) showed that *with few exceptions*, these 1,510 children were enrolled either at public or private schools and were temporarily absent for cause and excused on account of illness, under suspension, accident, misfortune in the family, or extenuating circumstances that justified temporary absence. *In a few instances* where they were not enrolled, or were truants, they were immediately placed in school by truant officers.[1]

The italic in the sentences above is not found in the report, but has been added merely to call attention to these significant

[1] *Report of the Chicago School Census of 1914*, p. 4.

words. For it appears that "in a few instances" the classification "not in school for thirty days" includes children who were out of school for more than thirty days and children who were not enrolled in school at all. It is admitted, then, in the text accompanying the statistical tables that there are some cases of unenrolled children found by the census enumerators, but it is not considered worth while, even in a report of twenty-four printed pages, to tell either the number of unenrolled children discovered or the number of children unlawfully absent from school when the enumeration was made. Would a truant or any other child found by the census enumerators to be unlawfully absent from school but who had not, at the time of the enumeration, been absent thirty consecutive days be counted in the groups "attending public or private schools"? This appears to be the case, and it seems only fair to ask that since the census enumerators must have been instructed to deal with such cases some account of their number should have been published.

Moreover, it is not clear on what authority children are classified as "attending school" or "absent for thirty days." Is the statement of the parent accepted without verification, or are the school records and the school census sheets compared in order to determine these facts?

Further discussion of such a cause of absence as "under suspension" should be given. It is desirable to know exactly how many children in Chicago have been excluded from school in this way, and it is only fair to ask whether we have not yet resources in the way of truant rooms and parental school cottages to prevent the suspension of children for thirty days.

A wasteful feature of the Chicago school census is that so much space is given to matters having no connection with the question of school attendance; in the 1914 census, for example, the entire adult as well as minor population was enumerated, and the right of the Board of Education to spend money on

enumerating the adult population of Chicago might well be questioned. Much irrelevant matter is also to be found in the text. There is, for example, a discussion of "our infant inhabitants" in Chicago, the number of wards having the largest number of babies, "births and deaths," "occupational population," "occupational population of the Loop district," decennial increases in the Chicago population since 1840, and other matters which may be of some interest to someone but which seem to have no relation to the enforcement of a compulsory education law. Certainly such matters could well be sacrificed to a more detailed presentation of facts regarding non-attendance.

In general, the objections to the present system of taking the census in Chicago may be summarized as follows:

1. A biennial census is inadequate as a means of enforcing the attendance law.

2. The school census should be confined to the enumeration of minors. The last school census, of 1914, was a census of the entire population. The superintendent of compulsory education recommended in the first census taken under his supervision that the "biennial school census should include all ages, adults as well as minors in federal census years as well as other periods." This would seem to imply that the primary purpose of the census taking was to count, at least biennially, the whole Chicago population and not to aid in the enforcement of the compulsory law. If the latter object were desired, it would have been wiser to recommend that the money be expended for an annual census of the minor population.[1]

[1] See School Census, 1910: "The city of Chicago, through the agency of the Board of Education should take a municipal census every two years to insure a full and accurate count of its adult population as well as its minors and complete nativity statistics of all inhabitants who mark the progress of a civic growth, which is the pride of the Chicagoan and the envy of the world." This last sentence seems to indicate only too plainly that the school census is to be taken in order that we may have an annual excuse for glorifying our bigness, not because school attendance is important.

3. The time of the taking of the school census should be changed from the end to the beginning of the school year. If the census is to be a means of enforcing the compulsory law, then it should be taken, not in May or June, but in September or October. Children placed in school in May will disappear again before the next autumn. Children placed in school in September or October should be there for an entire year. It is another indication of the failure to understand the use of the census in connection with the enforcement of the school attendance requirements that in the census reports of 1910 the following recommendation was made: "The school census should be taken in June and July when the teachers and truant officers are idle. With these trained experts as supervisors and enumerators in the canvass, it would prove prolific of good results." It is not clear just what the value would be of discovering in July, when the schools have been closed for a two months' summer vacation, that certain children had not attended school during the past year. Certainly cases of children unlawfully absent from school could not be discovered when the schools were not in session.

4. The method of presenting the statistical results should be entirely reorganized. It is not necessary to go into this matter in detail since the analysis of the statistics that appear in the 1914 census report shows how impossible it is to obtain from them such important facts as the number of unenrolled children, the number of children enrolled but unlawfully absent, the number of mentally and physically defective children who have been found unenrolled and who are found upon examination by the Department of Child-Study to be either fit for special rooms or institutions or whose condition is such that no provision is made for them under our present system.

Plans for the future need not be made in detail for the improvement of a system that is so barren of results. The

most important question to be raised here is concerning the official or department under whose auspices the enumeration is to be made. Close as is the connection between the school census and the work of the Department of Compulsory Education, it is doubtful whether or not a department should be asked to make a report which might seem to indicate that its own work was inefficient. A school census taken with thoroughness and care in a city as large as Chicago is bound to discover a very considerable number of unenrolled and unlawfully absent children. It is probable that any compulsory department would be reluctant to discover such facts.[1] If this is true then the taking of the school census should be transferred to some other department, possibly the department of statistics.

If the hope of an efficient state educational board or commission were not an impracticable one at the present time, it would be suggested that the census taking for the whole state should be done directly under state authority. The local authorities should not be asked to supervise and report on the enforcement of the compulsory education law any more than

[1] Thus, after the work of taking the school census had been given to the Department of Compulsory Education, each census report contained a statement to the effect that school attendance had never been better. In the census report of 1910 (p. 4, paragraph headed "Temporary Absentees"), we are told that "in comparison to the great increase in enrolment and membership and the perennial illness incidental to childhood, the attendance conditions are the best within the life of the schools." In 1912, in the synopsis of his census report, the superintendent of compulsory education in his capacity of census-taker noted that he found "attendance conditions at the public and private schools, of children between seven and fourteen years [the compulsory attendance age] the best within the life of Chicago" (p. 3). And again in the school census of 1914 (p. 4) we are told by the same authority that "the reports from principals at the public schools and teachers in charge of the private schools verified the fact that attendance conditions were the best [among children of compulsory education age in particular] within the history of the schools" (p. 4).

upon the enforcement of the child labor law.[1] A permanent state census board could be established which should be continuously active, taking the census in the opening of the school year in the larger cities, then enumerating for the small towns and rural districts, then returning to check up again on the larger cities, and so on in rotation.

Failing such a system, plans might be laid looking toward the establishment of a system of continuous enumeration or permanent census bureau in Chicago. Such a system could be most easily carried on at present by the different principals. That is, in each school might be kept a file containing an up-to-date register of each house in the district, showing the number of children in each family in each house. This would mean that each principal should have a clerk or clerks whose business it would be to keep this file up to date somewhat after the manner in which the "school visitor" in an English city keeps up his lists. These principals' clerks or visitors might combine the work of keeping up their file with the visiting teacher work which is described in the following chapter. The work of the Department of Compulsory Attendance need not be done away with since the court work could all be left to this department.

[1] No attempt has been made in these pages to discuss the use of the school census as a means of securing an equitable distribution of funds. Quite properly the state law specifies that the distribution of the state fund among the different counties should be only on the basis of a state or federal enumeration evidently on the supposition that the temptation to exaggerate the title to funds would be too great for the authorities of some of the counties concerned. The question might be raised as to whether this is not true also of distribution within the county which is now based on local returns. The whole situation would be easily improved if all the work of enumeration were under state control. The question might also be raised here as to whether school funds should be distributed on the basis of the minor population instead of on the basis of the minor population attending school. In the early days, it will be remembered, teachers were paid in proportion to the number of days their pupils attended school. See, for example, Appendix IV, doc. 2, sec. 4, pp. 433–34.

Recalcitrant parents and "habitual truants" might be referred to truant officers for prosecution, while the persistent search after the non-attending child should be done by a large staff of officers working on each day's list of absences for each individual school.

Plans looking toward a permanent school census system under state control should not be considered revolutionary since they are already being considered in Massachusetts, where a state board of education already has wide authority. In fact, this chapter may well be brought to a close with the following extract from a discussion of this subject in the *Annual Report of the Massachusetts State Board of Education* for 1909–10:

> Probably of more serious consequence educationally than the relatively small number of cases of truancy which occur is the large amount of irregular attendance for which there is no sufficient reason. It is now impracticable to measure this, because no one assembles at the close of each school year the attendance statistics of all children, whether in public or private schools or at work. Until this is done, no satisfactory means can be found for determining the exact loss to school children through preventable irregular attendance.
>
> For these and other reasons it may in time prove desirable for the Board to extend its work in such a way as to provide some inspection or supervision of the enforcement of compulsory attendance laws. At least one of the agents of the Board has in the past given some attention to this matter, especially in cases where local authorities were indifferent. The effect has been most salutary. A state agent carries a large weight of authority when he goes into a community with the view of co-operating in the effort to deal with recalcitrant parents and of inducing school committees and superintendents to be more active in enforcing the law. Furthermore, it would be the duty of a state agent employed for this particular purpose, to develop a system of registration which should be carried out by attendance officers. It has been sufficiently demonstrated that to keep up this registration would not greatly increase the responsibility of these officers, and it would, on the other hand,

materially strengthen their position in enforcing attendance. What is needed is an inventory and record of the children in the community who are legally required to attend school. In co-operation with the teachers, it would be a simple matter to record on individual cards at the close of each year the details of attendance, whether in parochial or public schools. In this way, interested individuals would always be able to locate all children of the community with whom the state is concerned, and it would be possible also from time to time to measure the amount of school attendance.

Connecticut has a satisfactory mechanism of just this sort. The state attendance officers are called upon to deal with difficult cases, the enforcement of which would prove a burden on school committees and superintendents. In the near future it would seem desirable for Massachusetts to establish some similar procedure.

Is it too much to hope that Illinois may also become progressive enough in educational matters to consider the adoption of a similar policy?

CHAPTER XVI

THE VISITING TEACHER AS A REMEDY FOR TRUANCY AND NON-ATTENDANCE

A study of the cases of non-attendance and truancy already cited cannot fail to bring conviction as to the inadequacy of present methods of treatment. The statute provides for a corps of truant officers whose duty it is to return children to school. As to the adequacy of the service, attention might be called to the fact that the number of truant officers seems very small when compared with the number maintained in some other cities. London, for example, maintains 390, or one officer for every 1,900 children; New York felt in 1913 very inadequately equipped with only 100 officers, or one to every 7,000 children; while Chicago felt that its work was properly done, "truancy being less than 1 per cent of the enrolment in both public and private schools," with only 53 officers, or one to every 8,419 children. The statute provides also for the prosecution of recalcitrant parents and for the commitment of truant and incorrigible boys to the Parental School. But to return the child to school today, without trying to deal with the influences that kept him out yesterday, is likely to mean that he will be absent again tomorrow or at some later date, when he may or may not be discovered by an officer of the department; to prosecute the parent may effect a temporary improvement in the child's school attendance, but if a parent is so lacking in intelligence with reference to his child's schooling as to require prosecution, he probably needs help of other kinds in order that he may better understand and fulfil the duty he owes his child. Moreover, it has been pointed out that there is great waste in committing a child to the Parental School on the ground that there is no hope in his home surroundings of an improvement in his conduct or school attendance, and then in a few months returning him to the surround-

ings in which he has been demoralized. It is the old story of the vicious circle.

What seems to be needed is the application to the problems of non-attendance and truancy of the same methods of treatment that are applied to other social problems. For, while non-attendance and truancy are school problems, they are of a social rather than of an educational character. It has been difficult for the community to realize that the problems of the school are not wholly educational. A large group of questions today, such as school meals, school nurses, open-air schools, employment supervision, social centers, and all the attempts to see that the children get medical care and special treatment when necessary are obviously social problems, and only educational in that the efficiency of the educational work depends upon their being properly understood and solved. In this group of social-educational problems properly belongs, too, the prevention of non-attendance and truancy. These new school functions which have grown up with the idea that there is a responsibility on the community to see that each child is given at least a minimum of child-care have made clear the necessity of co-operation on the part of the school with the work of the various social agencies in the community.

The proposal that the school should avail itself of the services of the social worker is not a novel suggestion. The English school system, as it has taken over the various social activities involved in feeding necessitous children, securing attendance, finding employment, and establishing a school medical service and school clinics, has developed effective machinery of a social character under the form of Care Committees.[1] And in New York and Boston the use of the home

[1] See Margaret Frere, *Children's Care Committees* (London, 1909); Douglas Pepler, *The Care Committee: The Child and the Parent* (London, 1912); and *Finding Employment for Children Who Leave the Grade Schools to Go to Work*, pp. 41–48: "Public Care of Working-Children in England and Germany," by E. Abbott.

and school visitor, or visiting teacher as she may be called, has been carried beyond the experimental stage.[1] In New York, the Public Education Association has maintained since 1907 a staff of seven visiting teachers, and more recently provision has been made in the public school system for an additional number of visiting teachers supported by the public funds.

The work of the visiting teacher has been described as "social work," and her work, if effective, must be based on the principles of what is known as good "case work," which means a thorough understanding and specialized treatment of each individual case. It means also knowledge of such social agencies as the community may have provided and resourcefulness in utilizing those agencies. It seems scarcely necessary to explain that "case work" was once supposed to be peculiar to the work of charity organization or relief societies, perhaps because investigation was thought to prevent relieving the "unworthy" poor. It now characterizes the work of all effective social agencies.

A detailed account of the visiting teacher's work has been given in reports issued by the Public Education Association of New York. For example, the most recent report shows that out of 873 children dealt with by the visiting teachers in 1913–14, their assistance was asked in 215 cases, or 24.6 per cent of the whole number, because of school maladjustment; in 171, or 19.6 per cent, because of ill-health; in 38, or 4.4 per cent, because of difficulties due to individual peculiarity; in 172, or 19.7 per cent, because of economic stress in the family; in 209, or 23.9 per cent, because of lack of family co-operation; in 43, or 4.9 per cent, because of immoral conditions in the home; in 25, or 2.9 per cent, because of adverse neighborhood conditions. To secure the necessary readjustments in these cases the city

[1] Dr. Richard C. Cabot, "Body and Soul in Work for Children," in *The Child in the City*, p. 18. See also the annual reports of Boston Home and School Association.

departments of Education, Police, Health, and Labor, the Tenement House Department, agencies for relief and correction, health agencies of various kinds, neighborhood agencies like settlements, employment agencies, and other educational institutions were drawn in.[1]

Through the efforts, then, of the school visitor, medical care and treatment are obtained, relief may be secured for the family through the proper agencies, employment found for a father or an older brother; the other children may likewise be aided in various ways; the child under care may be tutored or connected with some settlement group, or some special opportunity for play may be found for him, or perhaps he may be transferred to another room or school, all to the end and with the result that the purpose for which the elaborate and costly school system is established, the building erected, the trained teacher placed in that particular place at that time (namely, that that particular child, with the other children, shall receive at least the statutory minimum of education), shall be fulfilled. In rendering these services all the resources of the community are drawn upon, "to the end that conditions in the lives of

[1] See Public Education Association of City of New York, Bulletin No. 15, April 5, 1913, *The Visiting Teacher*, a report by Mary Flexner; also *The Visiting Teacher in New York City*, a statement of the function and an analysis of the work of the visiting teacher staff of the Public Education Association from 1912 to 1915 inclusive, by Harriet Johnson, June, 1916. Attention should be called to the fact that the visiting-teacher work was not initiated by the Public Education Association, but was taken over after the value of the work had been demonstrated by the employment of visiting teachers by several settlements. See also *Truancy, A Study of the Mental, Physical, and Social Factors of the Problem of Non-attendance at School*, by Elizabeth Irwin, published by the same association in June, 1915; and see *Schools and Social Reform*, report of Unionist Social Reform Committee on Education, by S. J. G. Hoare, M.P. It is interesting to note that the first National Conference of Visiting Teachers was held in New York in July, 1916, during the meeting there of the National Education Association.

children may be so adjusted that they may make more normal and more profitable school progress." Incidentally, the work of the regular teacher is rendered not only more efficient but more intelligent, sympathetic, and interesting, and incidentally, too, the families of the children cared for are enabled to understand much more clearly than would otherwise be possible, what the school system is intended to do for them and their children.

In Chicago certain services of this general character have for the past five years been rendered in connection with the "case work" done in the Employment Supervision Bureau which is now a part of the Chicago public school system. This bureau[1] attempts to find employment for the children who leave the grade schools to go to work, but many children are persuaded by the workers of the bureau to continue in school, and in other cases, in connection with aiding the children who ask help of this special character, very important services are rendered to other children in the family who are still attending school. Not only has the Employment Supervision Bureau shown the importance of a social agency at work within the school system, but in the last few months of the school year 1915–16 the employment of a visiting-teacher in the Jones School by a committee of the Chicago Woman's Club has shown the valuable results to be obtained from such work. In an unpublished report by this visiting teacher, it appears that children were sent to her for the following reasons: assistance believed to be needed by the family, non-attendance or misconduct, poor scholarship, physical or mental subnormality, illegally selling papers out of school hours, bodily uncleanliness, information as to home conditions desired by the principal, and so on. The work of this visiting teacher may be illustrated by the treatment of the following cases that were referred to her.

[1] See Appendix VII, "The Development of the Chicago Bureau of Employment Supervision."

A teacher reported that M———, who was absent one or two days each week, claimed that she was obliged to help with the washing and ironing for the family because her mother was ill. The visiting teacher went to the home but found that the mother showed no signs of ill-health. The visiting teacher then asked the Visiting Nurses Association to send a nurse to the home in order to find out if the mother's condition necessitated M———'s absence. The nurse secured a statement from the mother's physician saying, "there is absolutely no reason why the children should be kept out of school to help her." The visiting teacher then reported to the grade teacher, and M———'s excuse of being needed at home has not since been accepted and her attendance has been regular.

F———'s teacher reported that his mother wanted to take him out of school so that he might go to work. F——— is in the fourth grade. A visit was made to the home, and the mother was persuaded that F———'s continuance in school would be worth the sacrifice it entailed. Just a month later the teacher reported F———'s absence. Another visit was made to the home; it was found that F——— had been staying out of school because of a sore on his neck, and the visiting teacher, suspecting tuberculosis, made an arrangement to have the boy examined by the school doctor. As a result he was taken to the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium Dispensary, where the trouble was diagnosed as tuberculosis of the glands. An application was made to place F——— in the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium for the summer. The visiting teacher kept in touch with the boy until he was able to return to school.

J——— was reported as frequently absent. The visiting teacher found that the family of six lived in two rooms in the rear of a deplorably dirty tenement and that the little boy was kept home to care for two sisters, aged five and three, while his widowed mother went out washing. In this case the woman

was found to be eligible for a "widow's pension," and steps were immediately taken to secure the pension for her.

Further evidence that the assistance of social workers is needed by the schools is to be found in the number of cases of children referred by the schools to the various social agencies of Chicago. For example, a report of the Juvenile Protective Association prepared in April, 1916, discussed the cases concerning school children which were proving a heavy addition to the "case work" of that organization. According to this unpublished report, it appears that out of a total of 886 cases received by the Association during the three months of January, February, and March, 1916, 126 were school cases. This does not include all cases of school children handled by the association, but only the cases in which the assistance of the officers of the association was asked in dealing directly with the child's relationship to the school.

These 126 cases involving school children (which means, of course, a total of more than 126 children) included 85 complaints which came from the school authorities themselves in addition to complaints from outsiders. Of the 85 cases coming from the schools themselves 14 concerned attendance; 26, the physical condition of school children; 8 were cases of subnormal children; 12 were cases of bad environment; 14 involved a more general problem of child welfare; 4 were miscellaneous complaints received by schools and transferred; 4 were cases of boys who were incorrigible in school; and 3 were cases of children stealing in school.

In the two following cases illustrations are furnished of the 14 cases concerning attendance submitted by the schools. In the case of the J——— family there was a complaint of bad home conditions, and the principal of the school asked the association to undertake the work of improving the home influences, while the school would at the same time exert all possible pressure to secure regular school attendance. In

the case of the F——— family there was a similar complaint of bad home conditions, and the association was asked to make a report on the family situation that would enable the school to deal more intelligently with the attendance problem. But in this case the truant officer had also been asked to investigate the home, and had the association attempted an investigation there would have been the difficulty of having two social workers representing different organizations both attempting to deal with the same family with confusing results.

The truant officer is referred to as a social worker, and so she should be. But the work of these officers too often falls short of the standard of good social work in this community. This point is best illustrated by the failure of the truant officers to make use of the social registration bureau known as the "confidential exchange." By registering a case in the exchange, it is possible for the social worker to learn whether or not any other social workers have been dealing with the child or the family and what their experience has been. The case of the M——— family illustrates this point. Henry M———, who was thirteen years old, was brought into the central office of the Juvenile Protective Association one Friday afternoon while school was in session with $9.83 in his pockets, which he said he had begged in the Loop district during the day. He had been "reported" to the association by a business man who had enough social intelligence to know that it was not a kindness to the child to give him money and to encourage him to go on begging. An officer of the association who went to the school which Henry was supposed to attend found that he had been absent fifty-five half-days since September and that thirty-four of these absences were on Friday. He had been absent all day Friday thirteen times, and a half-day on Friday eight times. Later evidence showed that these regular Friday absences were for the purpose of begging. The attention of the truant officer had twice been called to Henry's absences. Each time she had

reported back to the school that the family was poor and the boy had stayed out "to get bread" for the family. Now the Juvenile Protective Association officer discovered by registering with the confidential exchange that the M——— family had been known to the United Charities for a period of eight years and that during this time strenuous efforts had been made to compel Mr. M——— to support his family. Within the last two years the United Charities had received thirteen reports of the child's begging, but the family had contrived by giving false addresses to elude the Charities visitors. The Juvenile Protective Association investigator called at the home and found ample confirmation of the facts in the United Charities record. The family were living in a good home, which was owned by Mr. M———'s father, who also owned another house on the same lot. Mr. M——— was at home unemployed, and the mother was at first plausible and then defiant. She admitted, when she found the officer in possession of the facts, that she sent the boy out begging every Friday, but said that she thought he was doing very well if he went to school four days a week. Had the truant officer consulted the record in the United Charities office, it is quite clear that the little boy would not have been excused for his begging expeditions. One great advantage which the private social agencies of Chicago have over the truant officers at the present time is that they register and "clear" in the confidential exchange the families with which they are asked to deal.

Attention may be called here to the teacher's acquiescence in Henry's Friday half-holiday when she was informed that it was a case of necessity. Reference has been made before to the fact that teachers assume too much latitude in determining what shall be accepted as a sufficient cause or a good excuse for absence. The real point of difficulty is that too often the teachers do not know anything about the organized social agencies of the community that might be asked to assist in cases

of seemingly necessary absences. Too often, also, it appears that truant officers are likewise ignorant of the community's social resources. Another illustration of this may be found in the case of Joe L——— which is also cited in the Juvenile Protective Association's report. On November 17, 1915, Joe's teacher sent in a report to the association complaining that Joe was habitually tardy or absent from school in the morning because he was out selling newspapers. Joe's mother when interviewed claimed that the school principal had given Joe permission to come late or to remain away from the morning session. Joe had bought during the summer the right to sell papers at a certain corner from 4:30 to 10:30 in the morning and was loath to part with this valuable concession. The principal when interviewed confirmed this statement, but said that she had granted the permission for September only and would notify the parents that it was now revoked. Her excuse for ignoring the compulsory education law was that she thought the boy should be given time to sell his corner; but since he had had nearly three months to do this, she decided that the quickest way to get it sold would be to require his attendance at school. A similar case was that of a principal who sent to the representative of another social agency a small boy with a letter containing the following statement: "George P———'s mother is well known to me. Her children are regular attendants at this school. I know Mrs. P——— to be in sore need of George's help and I recommend he be allowed to go to work on condition that he regularly attend night school. George . . . . is the oldest of six children. He is just ready for eighth grade." The letter, which was written in November, also stated that George would not be fourteen until the following May. Under the law the principal had no discretion as to compelling the child's school attendance for the next six months. But the point to be emphasized here is not merely the ignorance of or the indifference to the law on the part of teachers and principals,

but the fact that a competent social worker would have found some method of assisting the mother that did not involve a sacrifice of the child's schooling and a violation of the law. It is believed that in all cases of non-attendance alleged to be due to such causes as extreme poverty, need for child's earnings or assistance in helping to care for younger children, sickness of mother or other members of the family, or lack of suitable clothing, an experienced social worker by calling on the proper relief agencies, arranging for the care of younger children in a day nursery, arranging for the boarding out of other children during illness, and by many other devices can protect the child's right to the minimum of education prescribed by law.

Another illustration of the needless waste resulting from the failure to utilize the social resources that are available may be found in the case of a little Italian girl living in the Hull-House neighborhood, Josie D———, whose mother died in a hospital, leaving five children, the eldest, Tony, a boy of fourteen, and the youngest, a baby of two months. Josie was only twelve. She was not old enough to work like Tony, but her father, who was a switchman earning good wages, thought that she was old enough to stay at home and to take care of the two younger children. A nurse, who fortunately was a social worker as well as a nurse, explained that this was impossible, and thought it might be best to put the children in a home. She was wise enough, however, to ask advice from a specialized social agency, and it was arranged that the two younger children were to be left by Josie at an excellent day nursery, which was only a block from their home, and that Josie was to go to the nursery for lunch and to play after school until the father came home. But the father evidently did not approve of the plan. In March, just a year later, the teacher asked a United Charities worker who happened to be at the school if she would visit the home of Josie D———, who had not been to school for many months. The teacher said that Josie "was a very good girl and that she

and the truant officer had been lenient only because they knew that Josie was not to blame."

A visit to the home was made by the social worker, who found Josie, now aged thirteen, at home, cooking and trying to iron and to look after little Nick at the same time. She had just finished washing and was weary enough to say that she would much rather go to school, but there was no one at home to do the work. She explained that the baby had died during the past year, so there was only little Nick to look after. Another visit was made when the father was at home, and it was explained to him that Josie must go to school, that the baby would be much better off in a nursery, and that with a good salary, such as he was earning, he ought to pay a woman to wash and iron. But the man had been spoiled by the year's indulgence. He had had his own way, had found it easy to persuade the school authorities that Josie ought to be excused from school, and could not be convinced now that the charity visitor was speaking any more authoritatively than the nurse who had told him a year before that he could not keep Josie at home to do the work. Further attempt to influence the man was given up, and an appeal was made to the superintendent of the Department of Compulsory Education who immediately took steps to have the child placed in school.

Comment on this case is scarcely necessary. Josie had lost a whole year of schooling and the baby had died, a double catastrophe, which could probably have been avoided if the school authorities had known that co-operation with the social agencies only a few blocks away might have worked out a plan that would have released Josie from the burdens she was trying to carry.

There are many other cases like that of Josie, and for a large number of these there is now no social agency that can render the service needed. A school visitor who had already had the training and experience of a social worker could, if attached to

each school, do a great deal, not only toward making the children more regular in attendance but in seeing that they are in better condition for study when they arrive. Many families need persistent following up through a long period of years. These families who neglect their children's schooling are frequently families that are steadily going down and need to be watched closely. If this is not done, not only do the children in such families go to pieces, but they become centers of contagion through which many other children are harmed.

The history of the fruitless efforts to get the children of another family to school and to keep them there illustrates further the need for the services of school visitors who are competent social workers. In this case the work of the relief society should have been supplemented by the efforts of a representative of the school concerned primarily with the school attendance of the children.

When a visitor from the United Charities happened to be visiting the X——— school to ask about the school attendance of the children from a family that was being helped by the society, the principal of the school asked the visitor if something could not be done about the A——— family. He explained that three children of this family, Mary, aged twelve, who was in the fifth grade, Helen, aged eleven, who was in "high first," and Johnnie, aged seven, who was in "low first," were out of school because they had no shoes. The principal also said that he had heard that the family were a "bad lot," and, as he had heard that there were three able-bodied men in the family, he was anxious to prosecute them.

The children had been out of school all fall. The truant officer had picked them up and brought them to school once. Mary's teacher said that she was a nice little girl, but her attendance very poor; she had been out of school three months before being brought in by the truant officer. A visit to the family disclosed a miserable home. The father and two sons,

aged twenty-two and twenty, were all idle. The three school children looked very frail and neglected. Johnnie, aged seven, who had adenoids, had been examined by the nurse who said he could not return to school until his adenoids were removed; and since this had not been done he had lost in consequence nearly a year's schooling. The three children were fitted out and got back to school on December 2, and persistent efforts were made to drive the men to work. The children attended school regularly for two weeks in December, probably as a result of the visit made by the United Charities, and were then "chiefly absent again until transferred to the Y——— school."

In January the family was evicted and moved to another district. In March the family was again located and visited, and the children were found staying at home because they were "going to move," as the family had been evicted again. It was explained that the children must transfer to the B——— school and enrol at once. Three weeks later, the home was again visited, and the children found at home, this time, because they "had moved." They promised to attend the B——— school at once. Five days later, when another visit was made to the home, it was found that the two girls had gone to school, but the little boy, Johnnie, was at home alone with a man boarder.

These cases show how necessary is eternal vigilance in the cases where bad family conditions are interfering with the regular attendance of children. A school visitor would, it is believed, be of great service in following up such families and in making the persistent efforts which alone will prevent the demoralization and waste of non-attendance. The school visitor might also help to obviate the social waste that results in the cases in which the teacher or the principal knows that social agencies exist which might be helpful in securing proper treatment for children in the school, but refuses because

of misunderstanding, to co-operate with or make any use of such agencies.

In one school, for example, the principal appealed to an investigator for some clothing for the M——— children to wear to school. The children were out of school on the plea of insufficient clothing. The principal was very angry when his request was referred to the United Charities, and was at first unwilling to listen to the facts that were found in the records of that society. Mrs. M——— had been refused a pension by the Juvenile Court because she was immoral—flagrantly so. The United Charities had tried to improve conditions in the home but had finally, after the mother had given birth to an illegitimate child, referred the family to a probation officer. The two boys were committed to an institution for dependent children, but were never admitted because the institution at the time was under quarantine. The United Charities had recently sent a visitor to the home, who had found that the woman was employed in a good tailoring shop, earning $8 a week, but frankly admitted that she was living with a young man of her own nationality, who had not yet been persuaded to marry her. The United Charities found the children warmly and sufficiently dressed, and warned the woman that they were about to ask the interference of the court because the home was not fit for the children. The eleven-year-old girl was sufficiently provided with clothing to go to school, but the mother found it convenient to keep her at home to care for the four-year-old illegitimate child. Although an effort was made to secure the co-operation of the principal in getting such action from the court as would make the woman give up her evil relations or place the older children in some other home, he persisted in his belief that the children were absent from school on account of lack of proper clothing, and maintained that it was the duty of the society to give clothing to the children since their mother excused their non-attendance on this ground, and made no

further inquiries. He persisted also in his refusal to discuss any cases with representatives of the society, which he said "no doubt made a very efficient investigation," but had never to his knowledge during a long period of years given "actual aid to needy children." When pressed to give illustrations of such neglect he could give none except the case of an equally disreputable home which the society with the co-operation of a settlement, the officers of a children's society, a representative of the Juvenile Court, and every social agency in the community, except the school, had tried to make a fit place for the children to live in. Here again, the principal, who had never visited the home, persisted in believing that the only obstacle to regular attendance on the part of the children was the unwillingness of the society to pour in a supply of shoes and clothing, at his request, even when the society knew that the children were already supplied with both.

Conditions as untoward as this exist in many families which are not yet known to any social agency and with which the school alone comes in contact. If, then, there could be a good social worker attached to every school, not only cases of neglect but extreme poverty, sickness, incapacity on the part of the mother of the family, and unfavorable home conditions of many other kinds would be discovered at the earliest possible moment, and if there were in the community agencies for dealing with such cases, their aid could be promptly secured, or, if special forms of need could not be met, the attention of the community could be effectively called to that lack. In this way a great step forward might be taken toward the prevention of destitution in the next generation and a great deal of present suffering might be relieved.

Attention must also be called to the services of the visiting teacher in the innumerable cases in which the child is falling behind or getting dissatisfied with school. Sometimes this is due to an undiscovered physical or nervous cause that might

be counteracted if discovered in time. In connection with these children there is great opportunity for preventive work. Then, too, in the case of the children who are sent to the Parental School, much could be done during the period of their commitment to render their homes safer places for them to return to. In some instances families might be moved away from demoralizing neighborhood conditions, or the father could be helped to keep in work. In fact, all those influences hostile to the child's well-being could be studied and dealt with as effectively as the resources of the community would allow. Obviously great waste occurs every time a child is needlessly absent from school or present in such condition that he cannot take full advantage of the opportunity offered. A skilled home visitor would greatly reduce both these forms of waste. Moreover, she could discover conditions at so early a period that other agencies could be promptly called in. The services of the physician, the nurse, the dispensary, the sanitary bureau, the charitable society; the Juvenile Court or the friendly assistance of a neighboring settlement; these and other agencies could be invoked in the beginning of the family decline or before the family trouble became incurable or chronic.

At the present time the teacher or principal may ask the co-operation of the relief society or an agency for caring for children, such as the Juvenile Protective Association, but every agency is greatly overworked and understaffed, and none is in so good a position to keep track of changes in the family, whether they be for the better or for the worse, as the school would be if it were only adequately equipped. In fact, at the present time, the family may be visited by the school nurse, the visiting nurse, the relief visitor, and the representatives of, perhaps, other agencies; and in spite of the efforts of all these visitors the real source of demoralization may not be discovered because no one of them may be responsible for more than temporary service to the family. If the school were enabled

to discover hostile influences, the co-operation of other agencies in combating them could be sought and obtained, and the task of each efficiently performed, because in the attendance of the children at school there would be found a fairly adequate test of the conditions prevailing in the family.

Among other agencies which would greatly profit by the development of such co-operation within the school would be the medical inspection and school nursing service of the Department of Health. The city expends nearly $350,000 annually on the Child Hygiene Division of the health service, and the development of any machinery that will enable it more completely to fulfil the purpose for which it is established can be regarded only as sound economy. The report of the Juvenile Protective Association, which has been frequently quoted in this chapter, showed that in three months 28 cases of school children had been referred to the association because of their physical condition. Among these was the case of a child who came to school in a verminous condition. The school principal wrote to say that the school nurse had been sent once to the home, but the child's mother had used obscene language and therefore the nurse could not return. In another case a child was sent in from a near-by school with the request that the association arrange for a medical examination without any statement as to why the school medical service had not been utilized, and in two other cases the school principal complained that the children of a certain family came to school filthy and that a little boy was so offensive in his physical condition that other children did not like to sit near him. But in none of these cases had the school nurse been asked to see what could be done for these neglected children. A similar failure to utilize school resources was indicated in the cases of the subnormal children referred to the Juvenile Protective Association. Five of these children proved to be in need of commitment, but in two cases only had they been reported to the Department of Child-Study. One of

these was a subnormal girl of school age who for five years had not been in school at all. It is believed that a social worker in the capacity of "visiting teacher" could make such social resources as the schools already possess more effective in meeting the needs of such neglected and afflicted children.

It is not suggested that the school visitors or visiting teachers would replace or supplant the officers of the Department of Compulsory Education. They would supplement the work of that department, and, to the extent to which they could do preventive work, they might influence that department to specialize in the care of those cases in which there remains a considerable disciplinary element. To the extent to which such specialization took place, the efficiency of the department would doubtless be raised. In this connection the following statement from the final report of the New York Committee on School Inquiry may be quoted:

> The investigation of causes of irregularity of attendance, delinquency, and unsatisfactory progress of school children; preventive treatment for minimizing and removing these causes; and disciplinary treatment for the application and enforcement of remedial measures are integral and indispensable elements of educational administration. . . . . The (compulsory attendance) service, at present limits itself unduly to the performance of police functions, aiming chiefly at the immediate explanation and checking of truancy and irregularity, rather than the prevention of truancy and irregularity, by attempting to discover and control their causes. Such control of truancy by police methods alone is quite inadequate and often inappropriate. The harmful effect of irregularity of attendance on the education of children was pointed out above in the discussions of promotions and non-promotions. The evil effect of irregularity and truancy on character and conduct during and outside of school hours is obvious. The prevention of irregularity and truancy by striking at their causes is therefore even more important than the attempt to cure them.

CHAPTER XVII

THE TRUANCY PROBLEM IN THE CHICAGO SUBURBS AND IN OTHER PARTS OF ILLINOIS[1]

The services of the Department of Compulsory Education and the benefits of the Parental School are enjoyed only by the children of Chicago. Outside of Chicago, but within Cook County and therefore within the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court, there are 175 elementary-school districts. These districts may be divided into two groups. There are, first, those districts that are really rural in character; for example, 101 districts have the typical one-room, one-teacher rural school; 28 have 2 teachers each; 9 have 3, and 5 have 4 teachers each. Then, there are those districts that are suburban rather than rural; there are 32 of these. They employ all the way from 5 to 117 teachers and maintain modern graded schools.

In all these districts, just as in the cities, the education authorities are required by statute to appoint someone to act as a truant officer whose duty it shall be to return children to school and to prosecute recalcitrant parents.[2] These districts are not, however, required to establish parental or truant schools, and in no one of the suburban towns is there a parental school. The children in these districts are in fact in the same plight, so far as institutional provision is concerned, in which Chicago boys were before the establishment of the Chicago Parental School in 1902 and in which the girls and all fourteen- to sixteen-year-old Chicago children are now; and therefore no children from these districts are brought as truants before the Juvenile Court under the compulsory school law. Public

[1] For this chapter we are largely indebted to Miss Helen Campbell, research student, 1912–13.

[2] *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, sec. 275.

attention has been called to the needs of these children more than once. In 1909, for example, the chief probation officer of the Juvenile Court said in his annual report:

I am again forced to call attention to the truant situation in the suburban districts. Some time ago four boys were brought into the Juvenile Court, unable to read and write. Their respective ages were eleven, twelve, thirteen and fifteen years. That School Board like most school boards of suburban towns of Cook County employs no truant officers, and yet section 3 of An Act to Promote Attendance at School and to Prevent Truancy in effect July 1, 1907, plainly states: "The Board of Education in cities, towns, and villages shall appoint [not may appoint] at the time of appointment or election of teachers each year one or more truant officers whose duty it shall be to report all violations of this act to said Board of Education and to enter complaint against and prosecute all persons who shall appear to be guilty of such violations." From the field of truants come many delinquents. Can we, as citizens, say we have done our full duty until we do what we can under the law to lessen the number of truants?

Following this report of the need of work among the truant and delinquent children in the outlying towns, the Probation Department of the Juvenile Court began to do more work in those portions of the county lying outside the Chicago limits. And in 1912, the chief probation officer reported with special reference to one suburb as follows:

The efficiency of the Probation Work in Cook County outside of Chicago was increased by the purchase of a motor cycle. One of the gratifying pieces of work done by the motor-cycle officer was in stopping truancy in West Hammond in the spring of the year when so many of the children were in the habit of playing truant to work on the farms. This was done by a good deal of visiting to the public and parochial schools, to the farmers and to the parents of the children, and when necessary by prosecuting the parents in the West Hammond courts. Although this work was very satisfactory, the Chief Probation Officer feels that it should be taken care of by the truant officers of the local Boards of Education outside Chicago.

It was, unfortunately, not practicable for us to undertake a study of the compulsory education situation in all the outlying parts of Cook County, although it was believed such a study would be of great interest and importance. But an investigation of conditions in the suburban as distinct from the rural districts seemed to be possible, and was accordingly undertaken.

With the purpose, then, of ascertaining the extent and character of the truancy problem in the communities near Chicago, an effort was made to learn the conditions prevailing in the thirty-three suburban centers in Cook County in which there were graded schools. In those communities in which there was a superintendent of schools, he was interviewed. Otherwise the information was obtained from the principals of the various schools. These communities, in which there were in all 95 schools, may be classified in four groups: (1) 15 were purely residential; (2) 11 had manufacturing and laboring populations, one of these having as many as ten large industries; (3) 4 were entirely agricultural; (4) 3 had a mixture of laboring and agricultural residents. In one town in the last group, for example, there were two factories employing 200 men each, and here the recently arrived immigrants worked, while the majority of the population, who were farmers, were of old German stock. Only 9 of these 33 communities had a predominantly native American population, so that some of the so-called "residential towns" had a large immigrant element. The other communities had for the most part populations of German, Dutch, or Scandinavian descent, with perhaps a small colony or a few scattered families of recent immigrants. There were only 6 communities with a large population of recent immigrants from Southeastern Europe.

The number of schools in any one community varies from one to ten. The number of children enrolled in school in the different communities varies from about one hundred to four

thousand. Nine of the towns, three of which were residential and six of which were manufacturing suburbs, have over one thousand pupils enrolled in school.

The schools in the different towns vary widely in character, from those that are saved from being old-fashioned country schools only by being graded to those that have model equipment, a well-trained staff of teachers, and various modifications of the most modern methods of teaching. These differences expressed themselves in the buildings as well as in equipment. The picture of one of the schoolhouses, especially badly planned, has been used for years by the county superintendent as a horrible example showing what not to build. This particular schoolhouse was put up by a school board composed of farmers who knew nothing about proper school buildings, but its defects have been in some measure overcome since some intelligent women have become members of the board. In spite of improvements, however, the school still remains a model warning. In contrast to this situation, another suburb has a group of good school buildings with excellent playgrounds recently equipped and adapted for use after school hours. The same variation is shown in the manual-training equipment and instruction. Twenty-one schools have manual training in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, with special teachers and good equipment, and of these, five have handwork in all the other grades as well; three have handwork of some kind in a few grades as, for example, basket-making, or leather work before Christmas time, or a little pottery work; and nine have no manual training nor handwork of any kind. Several of the principals expressed their disapproval of these so-called "frills"; one, for example, whose school had a very superior equipment, said that the more he had the less he liked it, and that basket-making, paper-rolling, and even bookbinding had no place in the public schools. A superintendent said that he did not believe in putting such things in just because other

schools were doing it. Nevertheless, the majority of those who have no provision for work of this kind spoke of the lack with regret.

In none of the schools is there work that is really vocational. A few of the principals think that their domestic science and cooking might well be called vocational, since it does fit some of the pupils for wage-earning; and two principals claimed that their manual-training work was "pre-vocational," because it gave the boys a good knowledge of the use of tools, which helped them to know what they could do best. One superintendent reported that he was doing some personal vocational work with the boys who have to work outside of school hours, and with those who must leave school at the minimum age in order to work. These boys are placed with the business men of the town through the superintendent's efforts and are supervised so far as is possible.

With this general view of the communities in mind, the truancy situation in the suburbs may be described as follows: (1) in ten towns the truancy problem is present and recognized, and adequate provision is made for handling it; (2) in three towns the problem is present and recognized, but the provisions for handling it are inadequate; (3) in fourteen towns the problem is small or totally absent, but a truant officer has been appointed in compliance with the law; (4) in two towns the problem is present but unrecognized by the school authorities who have made no provision for dealing with it; (5) in four towns there is no problem—no truant officer is needed and none has been provided.

The general method of dealing with truants in the first group of towns is as follows. The superintendent's secretary collects from the teachers, either personally in the main building or by telephone from the other schools, the names of pupils whose absences the teacher thinks should be investigated. These names are telephoned to the truant officer, who does not

start out on his rounds until he has a report from each school. In one of the larger towns, where the truant officer gives full time to the work, he visits the child's home on the first day of absence, unless a note of excuse was brought on the preceding day. Eight of the towns in this group have truant officers who are also probation officers of the Juvenile Court, and of the other two, one is a town in which the chief of police acts also as a truant officer, and in the other the truant officer has no other employment. Three towns which are very near to each other have the same truant officer who is also a probation officer. Two of these towns are in the same district and have had this same officer for some time, while the third town has recently begun to employ him to handle the cases from their school, paying him a two-dollar fee for each case on which he makes a report. This arrangement has been found to be very satisfactory, as their problem is small at present, and the truant officer's familiarity with the whole district helps to make his work effective.

In two of the three towns in the next group the school janitors are the truant officers and have proved most unsatisfactory. In the third town, with a large immigrant population, the truant officer is the chief of police, whose duties take him out of town so frequently that a boy may stay out of school and return before the truant officer gets the case. In all these cases the superintendent or principal has practically assumed the responsibility of investigating the causes of absences and returning the child to school.

In the third group of towns, those in which there is a truant officer provided although there is little truancy, the principal or superintendent notifies the truant officer when his services are needed, and on the whole he is kept sufficiently busy. When the daily attendance is taken in the morning, any suspicious absences are reported to the principal, who in turn reports to the truant officer. If it is a case in which the parent does not

know of the child's absence, the child is usually returned by the parent at once; and if it is the fault of the parents, the law is explained and the principal's intention to enforce it is made clear, which is usually sufficient.

The three groups of towns in which there is some provision for handling truancy include twenty-seven of the thirty-three suburbs which were visited. It is of importance, however, to note that only four of the twenty-seven truant officers employed by these towns give their full time to the work, while the other twenty-three officers have other occupations and give only as much time as the conditions seem to require. Their other occupations were varied: six held the position of chief of police or village marshal; three were railroad baggage clerks; one a post-office clerk; two were housekeepers; five were janitors; one a paper-hanger; one a gymnasium assistant; one a city superintendent of buildings; one a merchant; one a school principal and one a superintendent. In one town which has four schools the principal of each is appointed truant officer. The superintendent explained that, if there were really a problem, this arrangement would be very cumbersome, but it is done merely to conform to statutory requirements.

In the fourth group are two towns in which the services of truant officers are obviously needed, but the school authorities profess to think conditions are satisfactory. In one town, the superintendent understands that there are some ten or twelve children who have never been in school and are just running the streets, "growing up like Topsy," as he expressed it. A truant officer could, however, be of no service because, on account of the political situation no attempt to get the children into school would succeed. The superintendent explained that the political situation made things difficult, that the board would not back him in getting these children into school, and that according to the law he could not do it without the board's support. Because of what he called "that curse of the school

districts in the country," the required annual school elections with the resulting lack of permanency of the teachers, the superintendent could not afford to antagonize the school board who elected him, and the people who elect the school board. The people would resent an attempt to force the children into school, and the results might be disastrous to the teaching force if he asked to have it done.

In the other town, the principal considers truancy a real menace and would like to have a truant officer, but feels that it would be unsatisfactory, as the officer would undoubtedly be controlled by "local politics." He asked the investigator not to mention to any of the teachers why she had come to the school as he wished to give them the impression that she was a county truant officer, "which might tone up the school attendance a little." Here the problem is one of irregularity of attendance because of poverty or indifference on the part of the parents, rather than from wilful or incorrigible conduct on the part of the children.

In the last group of towns the school principals thought that truant officers would be superfluous. One of these principals stated that he understood that the compulsory education law made the appointing of a truant officer mandatory, but as there never had been the slightest need for one, none had been appointed. In another town, the schoolhouse has become very small—much too small—and a new one is being built. The principal said that his problem was to find room for those who come, and since "every last child in town comes," no attendance officer seemed necessary.

Since records of the number of truant children are kept in seven towns only, it is impossible to discuss the extent of truancy and non-attendance in the suburbs. In six of these seven towns the truant officer was also probation officer and the records were kept in connection with the court work. In the seventh town the truant officer was chief of police. In none

of these cases were the records in the hands of the principal or superintendent. One school has just started a method of keeping the records that will be valuable in the future. In this case teachers send to the superintendent the names of children whose absences should be investigated. A card is made out and sent to the truant officer. He investigates, takes the necessary action in behalf of the child, fills out the rest of the card, and returns it to the superintendent for filing. The principals of two other schools had no methods of keeping records that would show the number of truancies. One of these declared that they kept no record of truancy, as they tried to forget it. He has, however, a set of record cards in his office, one for each pupil, with space for ten years' entries, and every time the pupil is sent to him for any reason an entry is made on the card, and this forms a complete record of his interviews with that child. In another town the causes of absences are carefully recorded by the superintendent as a precaution against contagious diseases.

But in the majority of cases the daily attendance books are the only records available. These books usually show the number of unexcused absences, although in most cases there is no record of the result of the officer's investigation or of whether or not he returned the child to school. Most of the principals replied in answer to a question regarding the number of cases of truancy in the school during a year as follows: "Not more than ten"; "About four"; "Five would cover it"; "Under ten"; "Perhaps twenty"; and so on. Accurate figures were obtained for three schools from truant officers who were probation officers as well.

In the suburbs, as in Chicago, the problem of truancy has several aspects. In these small towns as well as in the great neighboring city, non-attendance caused by children being kept at home to work is a greater evil than truancy. In the agricultural towns, boys are kept at home to work on the farms in the spring, and in the manufacturing towns girls and boys both are

kept at home to help with the washing and the care of younger children. One principal had just reported to the truant officer a case of a twelve-year-old boy who had been out of school for several days. The principal had heard that he had gone off to work for his brother on a near-by farm. In another town, the greatest trouble comes once a month on "market day," when a great many farmers keep their children out of school. The superintendent was trying an arrangement that allows children who sell at the market to be excused for the latter half of the morning session on market day.

In sixteen towns the principals report that constant vigilance is needed to prevent parents from taking their children out of school before they reach working age. In two towns, this problem has been solved by persuading the most important of the local employers not to employ children until they have secured the proper papers. Two principals, however, report cases where boys, because of extreme poverty, have been taken out of school a few months before they reached fourteen, and in both cases this was sanctioned by the principal, although it was, of course, in open violation of the law.

In the suburbs, there are perhaps more of the old-fashioned cases of truancy than in Chicago. Six boys sometimes decide that it is a good day in the timber, or go out swimming in June, or go off to a baseball game in the next town, or, when there is an epidemic of measles, a few of the unafflicted ones stay out. Such cases as these are reported from the towns where there is either no truant officer or one who is seldom used, and the matter is treated very informally. In one case, for example, the village marshal is sent after truant boys and in the case of boys who went to the ball game, the superintendent reported that he had settled the difficulty by giving them "a sound thrashing."

The problem of children being kept out of school for lack of clothes is not recognized as serious. Fourteen principals

reported that no cases have come to their notice, and sixteen principals said that the charitable organizations of the towns are efficient enough to handle such cases promptly. In six towns there are charity organization societies. In one of these the principal is president of the charity organization board, and in another the truant officer is a member of the board. In four towns, the churches and teachers combine to take care of cases of absence if due to lack of clothing; in one town there is a strong parent-teachers' association which provides for such cases; and in two others the woman's club does the work systematically. In one residential suburb a children's aid society and a visiting nurse provide such help as is needed, and in another suburb benevolent families are supposed to supply the needs. In still another town cases of poverty are referred to the outdoor relief authority. In this town books are supplied free when necessary from the funds paid to the township by non-resident pupils. In only three towns did the principal report that there was no way of providing for cases of children kept at home because of poverty.

In the outlying towns, as in the city, it has been found that one satisfactory method of getting children back into school, when they are out unnecessarily, is through prosecution or a threat to prosecute. Nine different school districts have prosecuted parents under the compulsory education law. All these cases were heard in the justice's court of the town, and in all cases the school authorities were successful. In only one instance was the fine more than $5 and costs, and in nearly all the cases the fine was suspended during the regular attendance of the child. The one exception to the $5 fine was one of $20, but this, too, was suspended. In six other towns the school authorities have threatened parents with prosecution, and found the threat entirely sufficient to bring the unruly parents to terms. The superintendent of schools in one town with a large immigrant population says that he does not prosecute as much as he

might; that he feels that the money that would be required for fines is best left in the families, and that prosecution is a weapon more effective if used judiciously. He prosecutes when he thinks the prosecution will have an educational influence on a certain group of parents, and he finds it successful whenever used as a last resort. The school which has been mentioned before as having political difficulties in stopping truancy finds the prosecution of parents absolutely impossible, since it is feared that the usually numerous relatives and friends of the father prosecuted would form an alliance and elect some of their number to the board, and would either force the superintendent out or eliminate some of his best teachers!

The Juvenile Court is resorted to largely by those sixteen schools that have either truant officers who are probation officers as well, or progressive principals. Some of the schools do not seem to realize that they can use the court. In fact, one principal, when the court was mentioned, remarked that his district was not within the city limits.

Most of the officers who have used the court say that they can usually deal with truancy cases themselves and prevent the truant from becoming delinquent, but when it is necessary to remove the child from the home because of extreme neglect, the child is brought into court as dependent. Since there is no parental school to which truant children from the suburban and rural districts can be committed, the greatest number of these truant children seem to have been sent to Glenwood, an institution for dependent boys, organized under the Industrial Schools Act.

Concerning the methods of ascertaining whether all children of school age are actually in school, no one of the principals interviewed was satisfied with the method he had worked out. Several arguments were offered, however, to show that in spite of the fact that the methods were unsatisfactory, the probability of there being any children unenrolled was small. The principal

of one of the largest schools said that he had been in the habit of going to real estate men for the names of new families, but he always found that the truant officer already had the names of the children. Other principals offered such explanations as the following: "Policemen on beats report all new children." "Principal knows town so well that he feels sure it would be impossible for a family to escape his notice." Those towns that have efficient truant officers depend on them to search out new arrivals of school age; in three towns a school census is taken by the principal himself, but the majority of the towns feel that they can depend on the school children reporting new arrivals or on the fact that the town is so small that no child could grow to school age and not be known and no new families could come in without being noticed.

Strange as it may seem, however, after these expressions of confidence, fifteen of the principals said that they had found cases of children unenrolled who ought to have been in school. The principals in several of the residential suburbs explained that this had been due merely to delays connected with the adjustment of the family to its new surroundings. There was one case, however, of a boy who was run over by an automobile in Chicago, whose family kept him out of school six months while the case was being settled, although he seemed well enough to attend. This condition was corrected when the principal mailed them a private copy of the school law. Another case of an unenrolled child was reported by the father, who disapproved of the mother's teaching him at home. One principal complained of the influence of politics; he said he had heard that there were in the town some ten or twelve children who had never been in school, some Swedish, some Polish, some Italian, and a few Americans; but according to the principal there was nothing for him to do, since he considers it a school-board problem and the school board refuses to act.

Another principal states that very often families move out from Chicago because they wish to avoid sending their children to school. The families frequently manage to evade the teachers for two or three months, and their children are very irregular in attendance after being compelled to enter school. One principal said that he thought the presence of the parochial school in town made it hard to tell whether all the children were really in school or not. Parents sometimes claim that children are in the parochial school when in reality they are for the time being not in any school at all.

In one town with an excellent school system the local Parent Teachers' Association made a complete census of the mothers of the district a few years ago and continued systematically to add any new ones who moved into town. This association makes the enrolment of all children in school one of its special aims. One principal is trying to work out a better method of enforcing the compulsory law, and thinks that co-operation between the town authorities and the school on this point is essential. In one town which has a single large industry employing nearly all the wage-earners in the population a rather unique system of control has developed. The manager of the manufacturing plant is also president of the school board; and in his dual capacity of employer and school official, it is claimed that he is very effective in keeping watch on the increase in population and vigilantly enforcing the compulsory education law.

Undoubtedly these thirty-three towns, because of their proximity to Chicago, have felt the influence of city methods and are farther advanced than a corresponding number of towns in central or southern Illinois would be if a similar investigation could be carried on in these districts. Such a situation can only be regarded as extremely unsatisfactory. State control over the local authorities, in this matter, must undoubtedly come about before the compulsory education law will really be enforced. In the matter of the enforcement of the factory acts and the child-labor law, state inspectors are provided in order that

local influences shall not interfere with the operation of the law. Until some measure of state control is provided, the compulsory education law will remain a dead letter wherever the local authorities do not wish to provide for its enforcement.

In conclusion it may be said that the enforcement of the compulsory education law in the outlying towns in Cook County seems to depend entirely upon the intelligence, courage, and energy of the individual school officials. Some of these men take no interest in the question, and others do not know what should be done to correct unsatisfactory conditions that are known to exist.

The same thing is of course true of other portions of the state. It would have been interesting to make a study of truancy and the enforcement of the compulsory education law in all school districts in the state. And at the beginning of our investigation a letter was addressed to the state superintendent asking for information with regard to the appointment of truant officers and the enforcement of the attendance law throughout the state. The following extract from his courteous and optimistic reply is of interest:

> Section 275, school law of 1909, provides that the board of education or the board of school directors, as the case may be, shall appoint at the time of the election of teachers, one or more truant officers whose duty it shall be to report all violation of the law and to enter a complaint against and prosecute all persons who shall appear to be guilty of such violation. So far as this office is advised truant officers are appointed in all or nearly all of the districts of this state. They are certainly appointed in the districts where their services are needed. No report is made of districts making or failing to make such appointments. I can say, however, that this law is being rigidly enforced with splendid results. This office lends all the assistance it can in this particular matter.

As no summary of the methods of enforcement in the various districts was to be obtained from the office of the state super-

intendent and as it was impracticable to make a study of conditions either in other cities or in rural districts, a letter was sent to the secretary of the board of education in each of the principal cities of the state and to the clerk of the court in each county, asking for information concerning the methods of preventing truancy and non-attendance. The letter inquired whether there was a juvenile court in the county, and, if so, to what extent it concerned itself with truancy, whether truant officers were appointed, and how; and to what extent truancy was dealt with in the schools.

Replies were received from each of the eleven cities in Illinois, not including Chicago, that had in 1910 a population of over 25,000, and from four other cities having a population of over 20,000. All these cities have truant officers, and in three of them there was more than one truant officer employed. In some of the cities, however, the officer gave only part time to this work. For example, in one city the functions of the truant officer are assigned to a city missionary. With very few exceptions, the letters which came, sometimes from the secretary of the board of education, sometimes from the superintendent, and sometimes from the truant officer himself, stated that the compulsory education law was well enforced and that there was very little difficulty in handling truancy cases. Such statements as the following were received: "The amount of truancy is very small, due to the official organization to prevent it and the interest of the children in the work of the school"; "Whenever a suspected case occurs, the officer is informed at once and it usually takes but a few minutes to find the absentee and to land him in the school room"; "By careful systematic work children are uniformly kept in school"; "It is our purpose to reduce truancy to a minimum and we are succeeding pretty well in bringing it about."

In one of the largest cities of the state, the officer reported that of 2,314 cases handled, only 58 proved to be truants. Her

method of procedure was as follows: With few exceptions the cases of absentees were reached and investigated within twenty-four hours of the time they were reported. Sometimes it was longer before action could be taken, as the people might not be at home when the call was made. Where the officers were sure that the address was correct, a note was left for the parents. This often resulted in a speedy return of the child to its place in school; or the parents would come to the office to confer with the officials concerning the case. It had not been necessary to impose any fines during the year. An explanation of the law to the parents, "showing the harm they were doing to the school, and the disgrace they were bringing on themselves as violators of the law, and reasoning with them, would lead them to see the right and to do it." "In each instance," the officer said, "the requirements of the law have been fully met, without hardship to any of the parties concerned, and all have been left in a friendly attitude of co-operation for the future, which was a greater victory than a fine would have gained."

In another city where 1,567 cases were handled, 144 were truants. Here the truant officer, working in co-operation with the Humane Society, the Ladies' Aid Society, the factory inspector and the Health Department, did much work beside the investigation of the absences of children.

In the community in which the truant officer is also city missionary there is a city policewoman who writes of the situation as follows:

> The work of the city missionary is under the philanthropic department of the Woman's Club, and was for five years combined with that of police matron in order to establish that much needed position. Now it is combined with the truant officer and the two kinds of duties will work very nicely together. . . . . We haven't got a Juvenile Court in our county, but our County Judge has the same privilege as a juvenile court, and we all co-operate in this work. Taking up the police work was a big help in this line. I look after

repeaters and find out the cause; if it is defective eyes, or nose, or ear, or home environments, have the children attended to according to their needs. If the parents cannot afford it, we see that it is attended to, and here is where the doctors have always co-operated with us. While we have always done truant work, before, it was just where I ran across it in my policewoman work, or as city missionary.

In these three cities, at least, the truant officers are attempting a work much broader than the mere insistence that children should be at their places in school, and are making a real effort to get at the causes of truancy and non-attendance and to remove them.

Five of the cities reported that they had juvenile courts, which could be called upon to deal with "the bad cases of truancy." In one of the cities, the court is said to be "more for the purpose of scaring the parents and children than for taking any action." The truant officer in one city turns over cases which must be brought into court, to the probation officer. Truant children are said to be occasionally sent by the court to the reform schools at Geneva or St. Charles.

Since answers were received from only 26 of the 102 counties of Illinois, it is not possible to draw many general conclusions as to the methods of dealing with truancy in the state. Of the 26 counties reporting, 12 have truant officers in the towns. In other cases, truancy is dealt with by the superintendent of the school, or by some of the school authorities, and in one or two cases by the county probation officer. Four counties report that they have practically no problem of truancy; three others are dissatisfied with the enforcement of the law, but have found no effective way of bettering it. The report from one of these counties is as follows: "Compulsory school laws not enforced to any great extent; superintendent of schools is trying to secure a truant officer for the schools of the county seat; attendance is not as regular as it should be." One county in the southern part of the state says that the law is not enforced to any extent,

although "sometimes the janitor of the schoolhouse gets after truants and gives them a scare." Obviously, a state standardizing agency would uncover many districts in which the attendance at school of children within the ages prescribed by law could be made both more universal and more regular.[1]

The possibilities of increased efficiency in a centralized agency are disclosed in the *Report of the New York State Education Department for the Year 1912*, in which it is pointed out that the power to withhold the allowance of the school fund from districts in which the child labor and school attendance laws are not enforced may be regarded as a powerful lever with which to raise the standard of their enforcement. For example, in seventeen districts, as much as one-half the school moneys apportioned in 1911 was withheld, and such pressure as that cannot long be withstood.

[1] See also the succeeding chapter, pp. 270–76, for further information regarding the enforcement of the compulsory attendance outside of Chicago.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SPECIAL PROBLEM OF THE IMMIGRANT CHILD

The importance of the compulsory education law as a means of help and protection to the immigrant family cannot be overestimated. Moreover, in a state like Illinois and in a great city like Chicago, in which the vast majority of the inhabitants are immigrants or the children of immigrants, a compulsory education law is indispensable as a means of safeguarding the state. The federal census of 1910 showed that in the population of Chicago 36 different nationalities or races were represented and that, to use round numbers, out of our 2,200,000 inhabitants, nearly 800,000 were foreign born and more than 900,000 others were the children of foreign-born parents, in contrast to the 445,000 white Americans who are "native born of native parents."[1] It is, moreover, important to note that out of the 1,690,000 who are either foreign born or the children of foreign-born parents only about 362,000, or about 21 per cent, came from English-speaking countries. And yet, for the Russian, the Pole, the Hungarian, the Bohemian, the Bulgarian, the Italian, or the Greek, a knowledge of English is an indispensable requisite for his own protection and his ultimate achievement in the bewildering and complex new life into which he has come.

It is to the public schools, obviously, that we must look for aid in teaching these great foreign groups not only the English language but the principles of government upon which our

[1] The exact census figures are as follows: foreign born, 781,217; native born (one or both parents foreign born), 912,701; native born, native parents (white), 445,139; total white population 2,139,057; total population 2,185,283. Out of the total 1,693,918 who are foreign born or the children of foreign-born parents, 361,854 are from English-speaking countries.

democracy is based. Although it is clear that the public schools must assist the immigrant adult[1] as well as the immigrant child, it is with the needs of the latter and the use of the compulsory education law as a means of meeting these needs that this chapter deals. It is important, however, to note that large numbers of these non-English-speaking immigrants come from countries where education is neither free nor compulsory. The *Report of the United States Commissioner-General of Immigration for the Year Ended June 30, 1914*, showed that the largest number of immigrants of any single racial group admitted to the United States during 1913–14 were those from the south of Italy, of whom 104,000, or 47 per cent of the total number fourteen years of age and over, were unable to read or write in their own language.[2]

From the point of view of the American state, the great problem is to help these people and their children to become intelligent and useful citizens in the shortest possible time; from the point of view of the immigrant, the great problem is that of understanding and appreciating the new world of which he has suddenly become a part and the opportunities for which he has made such heavy sacrifices. But oppressed as he is by poverty, dreading failure, and fearing deportation, the immediate solution of the problem as he sees it is to be able to "get a job" and to establish safely a new home. The advantages of learning English are not necessarily underestimated; but bread is felt to be more important than education, and the latter may be neglected. Fortunately, however, the immigrant soon learns that his earning capacity will be increased and his chances of getting a "job" improved if he is able to speak our language.

[1] On the subject of classes for adult immigrants, see *Report of the Massachusetts Commission on Immigration*, pp. 128 ff.

[2] See Table VII, "Sex, Age, Literacy, etc.," on p. 42 of the report. The total number of South Italians admitted was 251,612, and 218,676 of these were fourteen years of age and over.

The Americanization of the immigrant in the best sense of that word devolves more largely upon the public school perhaps than upon any other single agency; it is the public school, which through its Department of Compulsory Education insists that every newly arrived immigrant child, no matter how poor or how illiterate the parents may be, shall be given the best that America has to give through her system of free schools. Unfortunately it is not yet recognized that the problem of getting these children into school at the earliest possible moment and of compelling them to attend with regularity is a matter that concerns the future welfare of the state. This point has been emphasized in our earlier study of the Chicago Juvenile Court:

> The foreign-born residents of Chicago and of other large cities of the country tend to segregate themselves in separate national groups where, in churches and schools, and in social, fraternal, and national organizations, the speech, the ideals, and to some extent the manner of life of the mother country are zealously preserved and guarded. In these large foreign colonies, which lead a more or less isolated group life, there is therefore a problem of adaptation both difficult and complex; a problem which is especially perplexing in connection with the proper discipline of the American-born children. For it should be kept in mind that the institutions of the city are those developed by American experience in the working out of American ideals. The city government may rest for support upon the vote of the German, Irish, or Scandinavian colonies; but the city government is not German, Irish, or Scandinavian. The children and their parents may speak Polish, Hungarian, Russian or Yiddish; but these same children are to be trained for a civic life that has grown out of American experience and Anglo-Saxon tradition, and for an industrial life based on new world ideas of industrial organization. The churches in the foreign neighborhoods, as a means of self-preservation, may attempt to maintain the national language through the parochial schools; but the child who leaves the parochial school must be fitted into an American community life in which the mastery of the English tongue is not merely a necessary

tool but the only medium through which he may share the most valuable products of American civilization. The community may rob itself when it fails to realize and appropriate the cultural contribution which may be made by these groups to the collective life which in the end they must help to work out; but it robs the individual child and the coming generation in a much greater degree when it fails to demand for every member of every foreign colony the opportunity of acquiring at the earliest possible moment the use of the English language and an understanding of American institutions.[1]

Unfortunately, as yet, there exists no official machinery for discovering and notifying newly arrived immigrants of the requirements of the compulsory education law. The names and the ages of all the immigrant children arriving at our various ports of entry should be sent to the school authorities in the different cities, towns, or counties to which they are going. It would then be the first duty of the truant officer or other representative of the local education authority to inform the parents of these children that they must be immediately enrolled in school.[2] If the commissioner-general of immigration could be persuaded to set this machinery in motion, the results would be valuable in many ways. The immigrant parents would be impressed and the neighbors reimpressed with the public solicitude for education. Coming, as many of these people do, from countries where education is denied to the poor, they would learn to understand their new opportunities and obligations. In this way it would be possible to get all the immigrant children enrolled in school, and to do this promptly before they had gone to work and lost a part of the short time available for school attendance.

[1] *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, p. 55.

[2] This plan has been recommended by several immigration commissions. See *Report of the New York Commission of Immigration*, p. 97, and *Report of the Massachusetts Commission on Immigration*, p. 124. The federal Commission on Immigration presented five volumes of statistics on children of immigrants in schools but made no recommendations on this point.

At present, the children of newly arrived immigrants can, of course, evade the law with the greatest ease if they wish to do so; but fortunately the great majority of immigrants are eager to send their children to school, often more eager than many American families. The opportunity to give their children a chance at the education that they have missed has been one of the great factors inducing immigration to this country. It is clear, however, that with so many thousands of immigrants there must be a very considerable number of people who value the certain present earnings above the problematical future welfare of their children.

It has, therefore, in the past been largely a matter of accident as to how soon the children in a newly arrived immigrant family came under the influence of the compulsory education law. If the parents understood their duties and their privileges, they might with directions from the neighbors enrol their children at once. But if they are ignorant or indifferent, it may be a matter of weeks or months before the children get into school. Sometimes they are never entered at all.

Esther G———, for example, who was born January 23, 1901, came from Leeds, England, in 1912, at the age of twelve years. She did not enter school in Chicago, but as soon as she was fourteen she got her working certificate and applied at an agency for work. She had reached the seventh grade in the school that she attended in England. And in the two years of schooling to which she was entitled under the law, she could have been prepared for better paying work than she can obtain without it. She is the youngest of four children. Her brother, twenty-seven years old, is in England. Three sisters are working, earning $8, $9, and $5 a week, and the father works regularly, so that the family could have afforded to give her a high-school course. And cases like hers are less distressing than that of Rebecca H———, who is now sixteen years of age and came to Chicago at the age of twelve from Russia. She had

never attended school and did not enter the public schools here. Before she was fourteen she went to work in an apron factory, where she passed as sixteen years of age and was allowed to work on a power machine. As a result of working two and a half years in the factory, she developed tuberculosis and was sent to a sanitarium. She left the sanitarium recently and is looking for "light work." She can neither read nor write, and can speak and understand very little English. She had never had a working certificate.

Often, of course, these immigrant children are noticed on the street or in the tenement by a vigilant truant officer or some other alert social worker, or they are reported to the school principal by some neighboring child who understands that their absence from school is not in accord with American right and custom in the matter. But in the meantime, the days wasted are precious days. These children more than any other children in the country need every day at school that can be given them, because the children of the immigrants are also the children of the poor; they will have to leave school to go to work probably on the very earliest day that the law permits "working papers" to be issued to them. Most of them will never hear the English language spoken in their homes; their fathers and their mothers are many of them illiterate, and must be, in the presence of their children, learners rather than teachers. With these children it is a matter of learning "now or never"; they will come in contact with few if any educational influences outside of the schoolroom before they go to work, and after they go to work they are likely to lose the little they have already learned unless they have made sufficient progress to have learned at least the English language.

As an experiment in attempting to make some connection between the records of Ellis Island, our largest single port of entry for arriving immigrants, and the education authorities, the Immigrants' Protective League, one of Chicago's private

social agencies, began in 1911 to act as a clearing-house by obtaining from the federal immigration authorities the names of all arriving children of compulsory school age who were "manifested"[1] to various parts of the state of Illinois. The League then sent the names of these same children to the school authorities in the various localities to which the children had gone, and asked in return for a report as to whether or not the children had been placed in school. The reports showed that in a large number of cases the children had not been enrolled until after the notification of the school authorities by this private society.

In a not inconsiderable number of towns no one could be found, neither a truant officer, superintendent of schools, nor member of the Board of Education, who would send back the reply blanks showing whether or not the children had been placed in school. Table XXVIII shows for a period of nearly

TABLE XXVIII

RESULT OF INQUIRIES BY IMMIGRANTS' PROTECTIVE LEAGUE REGARDING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

	1911 (10 Months)	1912	1913	1914-15
Number of towns to which lists were sent	118	167	91	209
Number sending replies	97	69	62	139
Percentage sending replies	82	41	68	67
Percentage not sending replies	18	59	32	33

four years (from March, 1911, to October, 1915) the number of towns to which lists of immigrant children were sent by the Immigrants' Protective League and the number of towns which did and which did not send replies. It will be seen that in

[1] That is, listed on the ships "manifest" to the immigration authorities as destined for Illinois.

a considerable number of towns varying from 18 to 59 per cent of the whole number of towns to which lists were sent, there was no representative of the local school authority who was sufficiently interested to send any reply concerning the school enrolment of these newly arrived immigrant children. The marked falling off in the number of towns in 1913 and in 1915 was due to the drop in immigration during those years.

From the replies sent from the towns in which someone was willing to send back the reply cards, the data presented in Tables XXIX and XXX have been compiled showing the number of children arriving, the number that had been entered in school before the receipt of the Immigrants' Protective League notices, the number entered in school as a result of the sending of these notices, together, finally, with those who refused to enrol.

TABLE XXIX

SHOWING NUMBER OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN "MANIFESTED" TO 167 ILLINOIS TOWNS FROM MARCH 1, 1911, TO DECEMBER 31, 1915, WITH REPORTS FROM SCHOOL AUTHORITIES CONCERNING THEIR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Location of Children		Number
Children of compulsory age		821
In school	646	
Not enrolled in school	174	
Incapacitated	1	
Children not of compulsory age		138
Children not located		305
Total		1,264

Table XXIX shows that during this period of slightly less than four years, 821 children were found of compulsory school age. Of these children 646, or 79 per cent, had enrolled themselves in school; and 174, or 21 per cent, were not enrolled and presumably were not informed of their obligation to attend

under the compulsory law until a private organization had notified the school authorities of their existence.

The situation in Chicago, where the superintendent of compulsory education has co-operated most cordially with the Immigrants' Protective League, is shown in Table XXX. The

TABLE XXX

SHOWING NUMBER OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN MANIFESTED TO CHICAGO FROM SEPTEMBER 1911 TO MAY 1915* WITH REPORTS FROM COMPULSORY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CONCERNING THEIR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Location of Children		Number
Children of compulsory age		3,542
In school	2,977	
Not enrolled in school	532	
Incapacitated	33	
Children not of compulsory age		775
Children not located		3,383
Total		7,700

*This table does not include the figures for the year 1913–14 and therefore covers a period of two years and eight months only. For the year 1913–14 no report was made to the Immigrants' Protective League by the superintendent of compulsory education.

figures show that during a period of less than three years, 532 children were found in Chicago who were of compulsory school age but who were not enrolled in school until after the notices from the Immigrants' Protective League were received. The percentage of unenrolled children was smaller in Chicago than in the country towns—15 per cent as compared with 21 per cent of all the children between seven and fourteen years of age. This is due no doubt to the fact that many of the smaller cities and towns have made no provision for enforcing the compulsory law. Moreover, in Chicago, where there are so many social agencies, some of which are devoting themselves exclusively to work among immigrant groups, it is to be expected that a smaller proportion of children would be able to escape the knowledge of their duty of attending school. On the other hand it

should be noted that the number of children reported as "not located" is relatively very much higher in Chicago than in the other towns—3,383 children, or 44 per cent of the whole number in Chicago compared with 305 children, or 24 per cent of the whole number in towns outside.

In the majority of cases the school authorities reported that as a result of their visits the children of compulsory school age had been enrolled in school, but in some cases the report showed that the child's parents or guardian refused to comply with the law and that the school authorities for one reason or another would not or could not enforce the law. Thus, in one town three Scotch children, all under fourteen, were found whose parents refused to send them to school. In this case the superintendent said he was powerless to compel them to attend, as the town had no money to enforce the compulsory attendance law. In another town an English girl of eight was kept from school because her mother was ill. The truant officer reported that nothing could be done about the child because the uncle who cared for the mother and child was a reputable man who gave them a good home and would in time be sure to send the child to school.

From another town the superintendent, replying to an inquiry about a family of three children, wrote that they were not in school, and he sent the following memorandum with regard to them: "Came to school a few days and had to go home to rid themselves of vermin. Parents absolutely refused to return them to school. No money to enforce compulsory laws. Age was misstated to emigration [*sic*] bureau. Deport them unless they agree to attend school." The assumption on the part of this superintendent was that the compulsory education laws were to be ignored by the local authorities but could be enforced by some "emigration bureau" by means of deportation, in spite of the fact that deportation would not be legal in such a case.

In several instances children were not in school because there were no "beginners' classes" for them to enter. In many towns these classes are formed only in the fall, and a child arriving during the winter or the spring must wait until the next fall to enter school. Since these immigrant children have at most so few years for school attendance and since they have so much to learn if they are to become useful American citizens, some provision should always be made for enrolling them in school at the earliest opportunity. Moreover, the school authorities are under obligations to provide instruction for them if the compulsory law is complied with.

In a number of cases it was found that the children had been sent illegally to work. The lists sent out by the League include the names and the addresses of all children under sixteen years of age, because in many cases it appears upon investigation that the children are younger than the records indicate. The age given by the parents on the Ellis Island "manifest" is increased sometimes with the hope of eluding the school authorities and of putting the child to work illegally.

In one town a thirteen-year-old Greek boy was found at work instead of at school, and investigation showed that he had been admitted to this country under bonds to attend school for two years. He was at once placed in school, and the superintendent undertook to make bimonthly reports as to his attendance and progress to the Bureau of Immigration at Ellis Island.

Another working child was a German girl of twelve, who was kept at home to help with the housework. Her mother had not intended to send her to school at all, because she would that year have finished the common-school course in Germany. She was quite willing to comply with the law, however, when she was told that in Illinois the child was required to attend school until her fourteenth birthday.

In one town the superintendent of schools complained that the parochial school authorities had in several instances issued

working certificates to children under legal age, apparently without ascertaining their correct age. In one case when the matter was looked up and the illegality of the certificate was proved, the father had obviously given false information. When confronted with the facts, the father destroyed the certificate and made no further objection to placing the boy in school. In this same town a Magyar boy of thirteen was found working in the cotton mills. The case was reported to the factory inspector, who saw to it that the boy was sent to school. In another town a Lithuanian boy of eleven, whose parents claimed that he was sixteen, obtained a working certificate from a parochial school and got a job in a large industrial plant. This case also was reported to the factory inspector. In another case, two Finnish children, a boy of ten and a girl of seven, were in school but in their leisure hours were tending bar in their father's saloon, in violation of the provisions of the child labor law.

Sometimes, of course, the family seemed not to know of their obligations to send the child to school and were glad to comply when notified. Thus, a German boy of eleven, whose mother was employed in domestic service, was living with friends who had not thought of placing him in school; but the mother was glad enough to send him at once when she learned through the visit of the truant officer that he was expected to go.

The importance of these visits to immigrant children is further indicated by the fact that a number of cases were reported of children who were afraid to go to school alone, but went gladly when escorted by the truant officer.

Occasionally the visit of the investigator brought into school a child who was above the compulsory age. Thus, a Greek boy of fifteen was being kept out of school until he should learn English, and the truant officer was able to persuade his friends that he would acquire the desired knowledge much more quickly by attending school.

It is a pleasure to record that in many cases the new immigrant families had discovered the educational resources of the town without assistance and were using them to the fullest possible extent. Thus, one Croatian boy of fifteen had entered the evening as well as the day school; and a family of Austrian Hebrews was found in which, besides the three children in the day school, there were four older ones who worked in the daytime and were in regular attendance at night school.

The replies to the notices sent show that some of the persons acting as truant officers had evidently enjoyed none of the advantages of the compulsory system in their own youth, their communications being sometimes quite illiterate. Thus one officer who was asked to find out whether certain immigrant children who were "manifested" to his town had been enrolled in school wrote back, "There are no foren children in our school." In another town the clerk of the board, who evidently acts as truant officer, wrote very illegibly, "I Visit the School once Every Five Weeks. we are Looking after all Foren Born Children Very Clost So that they are in School all the time." From another town, the clerk of the board wrote with regard to a family of three children, "we have a good many Italians tending our school they tend regular the 3 you have wrote to us about are not in our school."

The children most in need of protection are, of course, the children who are nearly fourteen years of age or who are large enough to pass for fourteen. To parents who are not only very ignorant but very poor the temptation to sacrifice the older children to the younger ones and to the general family security is great. As we have said elsewhere these children will, unless their parents or guardians are promptly made to understand the compulsory education law, "lose what is perhaps their only chance of schooling and what is certainly their best chance of initiation into American life and their best introduction to those new conditions with which they must become

familiar." There may be found in the records of the United Charities of Chicago many cases where the eldest child of an immigrant family has been sacrificed. For example, an Italian family with eight children, survivors of the Messina earthquake, first applied for help at Hull-House because the eldest child, Chiara, who was said to be nearly sixteen years old, was out of work as a result of the garment workers' strike, and the father was also out of work. The family wished to buy milk for the baby on credit. The parents were at that time also trying to get a certificate for the thirteen-year-old girl, Giovanna, who was deaf and subnormal, but they were compelled to return the child to school. Several months later they tried again to get working papers for Giovanna, and then claimed that she was fourteen years old. The district office of the United Charities to whom the family had been referred then wrote to Messina and received a reply, saying that the records were not destroyed by the earthquake, and it was therefore possible to ascertain the correct dates of birth, which were given, showing that Giovanna was only twelve years old instead of fourteen, and that Chiara was not yet fourteen, although she had been working ever since the arrival of the family in Chicago more than two years before.

Chiara's working certificate was then confiscated, and she was returned to school by order of the Department of Compulsory Education, but came to Hull-House in the evening, saying that she could not go to school with such small children; she was a "great big girl and would be married soon." She had, of course, in these two years lost her only chance of learning English. She will now never learn to read. Her mother was very angry and said "Hull-House ladies are dreaming to send so old a girl to school" (thirteen years, nine months). The Messina records were obtained too late to do anything for Chiara, but they have saved the younger child, who has now had her tonsils removed and her deafness cured and has two years

of schooling ahead of her. The eldest child will be as illiterate as her parents, and the hard part of it is that she will be illiterate in spite of our compulsory law and our free school system.

Especially difficult are the cases of immigrant children who drift in from other cities and who may have lived in several towns without attending school in any one of them. Unless some system of transfers between cities can be worked out, there is not much hope of catching these more migratory families. Some of them pass through the hands of social workers, but frequently not until it is too late to save the children. For example, a Polish woman applied for help in a district office of the United Charities of Chicago, saying that her six children were freezing and her husband ill in the hospital with incurable heart trouble. Their story was pitiful: the man had worked in the sulphur mines at home and, hearing of the high wages in America, decided to come to this country. He came to New York, but was unsuccessful in finding work and then went to Pennsylvania, because he had heard of work in the brickyards there at $1.50 a day. He had saved enough in two years to bring over his wife and children; but after the first year, work became slack, so he moved to another small town in the same state, and then, still unsuccessful, he went back to New York, where he struggled along for sixteen months, and then came to Chicago, where work was plentiful but for him disastrous, since it had led to overwork and a mortal illness. The oldest child, Hedwig, who was not quite twelve, seemed so large and stout that neighbors told them to say she was fourteen and the child could earn money for them. When she was told that the little girl must leave the candy factory where she was working and go to school the mother refused to submit, and a long struggle followed to get the child in school. The mother claimed that the child was unwilling to go to school and felt no other excuse was needed.

Another interesting case is that of a little Italian boy, Joe C———, one of five children. Application for help was made at the office of the United Charities when the father was out of work. Joe, who was then the proud possessor of a working certificate, could not spell his name although he could write it. He could neither write nor spell any other word, however simple. He had attended the B——— School in Chicago for one month, but he did not know what grade he had been in. He had been in the town of S——— near Chicago for about a year and a half and claimed that he had attended school there. He has not been able to "get a job" since he left school. What hope is there, if he does, that he will ever learn to read and write?

One great difficulty in the way of educating the non-English-speaking immigrant child is the foreign parochial school. It has been pointed out that the Illinois law permits a child to leave school and to go to work without knowing how to read or write the English language. The provision of the old compulsory education law of 1889, which required children to attend schools in which the instruction was in English was stricken out at the succeeding session of the legislature through the influence of the sectarian schools; and at the time, the German-Lutheran schools of Cook County seem to have been most influential in obtaining the omission of the words "in English."

Later, when the child labor law made provision for the granting of working papers, it was not possible to include among the educational requirements that the children leaving school to go to work should be able to speak, read and write the English language. The law merely provides that the children shall be able to read and write simple sentences; and the additional words "in English," which were so much desired by those interested in the protection of children were finally omitted from the law. The result has been the establishment, not only in Chicago but in other parts of the state, of large numbers of parochial schools in foreign neighborhoods in which the instruc-

tion is carried on in part, at least, in some language other than English. It has not been possible to obtain a complete list of these schools, but the *Official Catholic Directory for 1914* shows that there were in that year in Chicago 23 Polish schools, 22 German, 8 Bohemian, 5 Lithuanian, 3 French, 3 Italian, 3 Slovak, 1 Belgian and 1 Ruthenian school maintained by various Roman Catholic parishes. According to the same directory these 69 schools had more than 33,000 pupils enrolled in the year 1914.[1] There were also the German-Lutheran schools and the schools maintained by the Greek Catholics, which are of course quite separate from the Roman Catholic schools. The amount of instruction in English that is given in these schools varies greatly. In some nearly all the instruction is in the English language and in others English seems to be taught only a few hours per week.[2]

Unfortunately, the easiest way to deal with any difficulty is to ignore it instead of trying to understand the problem that needs to be solved. And all phases of the parochial school question, including that of the bilingual schools, are usually dealt with in this way. Since the question is in part a religious one, there seems to be a feeling that it should never be discussed.

[1] This list, of course, excludes the Catholic parochial schools which are not especially indicated in the directory to be Polish, Bohemian, etc. The directory shows that there are, including the English-speaking schools, a total of 181 Catholic parochial schools in Chicago with 95,110 pupils enrolled (*Official Catholic Directory for 1914* [New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons], p. 74).

[2] Publicity has been given in the Chicago papers, since the writing of this chapter, to an announcement indicating that there will be in the future more and better English teaching in the foreign-language-speaking parochial schools in the Roman Catholic diocese of Chicago. The problem of the foreign school, however, is not exclusively a Roman Catholic problem. And again it must be emphasized that this problem will not be solved until the teaching of English is made compulsory by a state law enforced by state inspectors, and until a knowledge of English is made a prerequisite for the issuing of working papers.

Yet surely the question of the right of the state to insist that its children shall be so educated that they shall be able to understand the language of their country is an elementary one. It is important to note here the results of an investigation made in Massachusetts of the bilingual schools of that state. The compulsory education law of Massachusetts, unlike that of Illinois, provides that attendance at private schools will be accepted in compliance with the provisions of the compulsory law only when the local school committees shall have approved these schools, and such approval shall be given only "when the instruction in all the studies required by law is in the English language, and when they are satisfied that such instruction equals in thoroughness and efficiency and in progress made therein, the public schools in the same city or town." The Massachusetts State Commission on Immigration, after a careful investigation of the bilingual schools, reported that "for obvious reasons, such as local influences, political expediency and in some cases indifference, the school committees make no pretense of fulfilling this obligation and, under existing conditions, there is no prospect that they ever will."

Because the subject of the bilingual school is so little discussed and so little understood and because it has not been possible to make an investigation of the large number of such schools that exist in Chicago,[1] and also because there is every reason to believe that a similar investigation in Chicago would disclose similar results here, it has seemed worth while to quote at some length the account of the bilingual schools given in the report of the Massachusetts Immigration Commission:

[1] Unfortunately the exact number of such schools cannot be given. It has been shown that the Roman Catholic directory indicates 69 such schools, and it seems probable that such schools are not always designated and that the number is even larger. Add to these the number of German-Lutheran schools and the Greek Catholic schools and the number becomes very considerable.

The large number (over 200) of parochial schools throughout the State may be divided into two groups; first, those in which the teaching is conducted in English exclusively, and second, those in which some of the instruction is conducted in English and some in a foreign language.

Schools of the first group were not investigated by the commission. Like the public schools, many of these enrol children of non-English-speaking parentage, and like the public schools they are affording those children the associations and all the advantages of instruction that they are affording the native-born.

In the second group, 39 schools in 19 different towns and cities in Massachusetts were visited. The almost universal rule in these schools is to teach in English for half a day, and in Polish, Italian, Portuguese, French or Greek for half a day. These bilingual schools, of which there are over 90 in Massachusetts, present a problem of much difficulty, involving both religious and national motives deeply rooted in the heart and mind of the foreign-speaking peoples, and entitled to sympathetic recognition by the entire community. The problem, moreover, includes highly important social, financial and economic considerations. In some instances it is being successfully solved.

Teachers in all these schools have to deal with a perplexing situation, inasmuch as the pupils when they first enter rarely speak English, and in instruction precedence is given to subjects conducted in their native tongue. The complication is increased by reason of the fact that many of these teachers have but a limited knowledge of the English language; comparatively few speak it fluently, some do not speak it at all. Such lay teachers as are employed are, generally speaking, wholly unqualified. In certain schools of one nationality, conducted wholly by lay teachers, the instruction, discipline and results are a mere travesty on even rudimentary educational methods. Under such conditions proper progress in English or any other study is impossible.

The atmosphere of any one of these schools depends mainly upon the attitude of the pastor of the church with which it is connected. While some of these pastors are thoroughly imbued with American ideals, the majority are of foreign birth, education and training, so

intensely devoted to their native land that their patriotism permits no divided allegiance; hence any special emphasis upon the study of English or American traditions and ideals, which often the Superior in immediate charge would gladly undertake, does not enlist their sympathy or meet with their approval.

Furthermore, while we have the greatest respect for the exalted character, disinterested service and untiring zeal of the teachers, we must regretfully declare that in very many cases they are not equipped by previous training (often excellent in their own language and literature), by familiarity with American civic or social ideals, or with the stress of modern economic pressure, to impress sympathetically upon the understanding of their pupils the fundamental knowledge which is required alike in the interests of the State and of the future industrial life of the pupils themselves. In some instances the atmosphere is so intensely foreign that progress in acquiring English is deprecated rather than encouraged.

In drawing comparisons between these and other schools the element of time must be considered; for as the system of parochial schools, and particularly of bilingual schools, is comparatively young, it could hardly be expected that these privately maintained schools should be able to make as rapid progress in the character of their buildings and equipment as those schools maintained by the public purse.

While a large number of the school buildings are of excellent construction in every respect, and many may be rated as reasonably good, some were not originally erected for school purposes; they are distinctly bad in lighting and in ventilation and are positively injurious to the physical well-being of the children.

The financial resources of these schools—mainly the voluntary offerings of poorly paid wage earners—are utterly inadequate to the magnitude of the work undertaken. This financial handicap may be regarded as the principal cause of the inability of so many of these schools to approach modern educational requirements in housing, in limiting the size of classes to reasonable numbers, in the character of textbooks used, or in the employment of a sufficient number of thoroughly efficient lay teachers to offset the scarcity of teachers of the religious orders.

When we consider the comparatively inelastic character of the wages of the groups who support these schools, and the increasing cost of living, it is difficult to see how the revenues upon which these schools depend can be greatly enlarged. . . . .

That the knowledge of a second language has cultural advantages is beyond dispute, and should be encouraged, for in the history, traditions, literature and art of the various nations there is much that would enrich American life. But it is not in the pursuit of culture that the overwhelming majority of these children are to spend their lives. The far more practical and far more difficult problem of bread-winning is the one to which—day in and day out—they will be forced to devote their unremitting attention. It is therefore of vital importance to them, as well as to the State, that they should be fitted in the best possible manner for this daily bread-and-butter struggle. As they succeed or fail in this they will become an asset or a liability of the State, for, waiving other grave possibilities, there inevitably will be a marked increase in dependence resulting from the premature physical and mental breakdown of those who, from lack of proper training, are forever unable to escape from the most exhausting and the poorest-paid occupations.

It is therefore of importance to the Commonwealth that in the secular instruction in these schools, the study of English should be given first place, and that all studies, except religion and the native language of the children, should be conducted in the English language. The study of the foreign language should be made clearly subordinate to that of English. It should be possible to follow this plan without serious interference with the spiritual or national motive of these schools.[1]

The first step that is needed to insure that English is adequately taught in the bilingual schools is to restore to the compulsory education law of Illinois the words requiring that certain specified parts of the teaching in private school must be "in English" if work in these schools is to be accepted under the compulsory school law. But such a provision obviously could not now be enforced by the local authorities in Illinois any more

[1] *Report of the Massachusetts Committee on Immigration*, pp. 148–51.

than in Massachusetts. The only way to make such a provision effective would be to place the supervision of these schools under a state educational board. To quote a concluding paragraph from the Massachusetts report:

> The task of gradually bringing these schools up to the desired standard is one calling for infinite wisdom, tact, and patience, as well as for clear comprehension and sympathetic recognition of the aspirations of the people who voluntarily support them. In such a spirit the task should be begun at once, and plans in the best interest of all concerned should be worked out harmoniously. As the local school committees have not even attempted to perform this task, the commission recommends that this responsibility be vested in the State Board of Education, as provided in the bill that is submitted with this report.

Another means of insuring the adequate teaching of English in the private schools is to insert in the child labor law of Illinois a provision that no child shall be given "working papers until he is able to read and write simple sentences in English." Until the words "in English" are restored to the compulsory education law and added to the working-certificate provision of the child labor law, the essential first steps toward the Americanization of the immigrant will not and can not be taken.

In the valuable *Report on the Employment Certificate System in Connecticut* recently issued by the federal Children's Bureau, attention is called to the failure of the Connecticut law to include the ability to read and write English among the educational requirements for the issuing of employment certificates. The comment of the government investigators on this feature of the Connecticut system is as follows:

> The theory upon which it is attempted to justify this omission is that it must be made easy for a foreign-born child to obtain a certificate, or else he will go to work without any legal protection whatever. However, the problem of registering the foreign-born child

either in school or in the certificate office has to be met in any event, for probably a majority of these children have not received sufficient education in their own language to pass the arithmetic test. This test is said to keep many foreign-born children in school until they are 16 years of age, while American children, unless mentally defective, can generally go to work at 14 if they wish. Certainly an unenforceable provision of law is undesirable; but it does not seem impossible to devise methods of enforcing a law which would require a knowledge of the language of their adopted country by young wage earners.[1]

Finally, it must be pointed out that our compulsory education system was devised to meet the needs of American-born children of American parents before the problem of assimilating the non-English speaking immigrants or any other immigrants had come into existence. If compulsory education laws were needed for the education of the native American, they are doubly needed for the immigrant who today needs to learn not only our language, but also the principles of our democracy, if these principles are to endure and "the promise of American life" is not to be obscured.

[1] Helen L. Sumner and Ethel E. Hanks, *Employment Certificate System in Connecticut* (Washington, 1915), p. 41. U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau.

CHAPTER XIX

THE EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATE SYSTEM AND THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE PERIOD

In most American states the upper age limit designated by the compulsory school law is the fourteenth birthday.[1] In Illinois, the compulsory period nominally extends to the sixteenth birthday; but since the law provides that children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen may be excused from school provided they go to work, the actual age limit here as in other states is really fourteen.

The most important question to be considered with regard to the upper age limit of the compulsory attendance period is whether or not proper safeguards have been devised to prevent children from leaving before the fourteenth birthday has been reached. Since the vast majority of children who leave school

[1] A useful collection of child labor laws has recently been published by the federal Children's Bureau (see *Child Labor Legislation in the United States*, by Sumner and Merritt). According to the digest of the compulsory attendance laws given in this volume, two states are in mediaeval darkness and have as yet no compulsory education laws. These states are Georgia and Mississippi. The age limit varies in the remaining states as follows: the upper age limit fixed by the law is only twelve years in two states, Virginia and North Carolina. Texas makes the age limit fourteen, and Kentucky makes it sixteen; but both provide "exemptions" for children between twelve and fourteen, if their labor seems necessary, so that the age limit is really twelve rather than sixteen. In all the remaining states, with the exception of Ohio, the age limit is fourteen. In a considerable number of these states, the nominal age limit has been raised beyond fourteen years, as in Illinois, where it is sixteen years; but since in all these states, children may be exempted for various reasons from the provisions of the law and allowed to leave school to go to work at fourteen, the age

on or near the fourteenth birthday are children who leave school to go to work, the most essential safeguard that has been devised to prevent an illegal withdrawal from school is to provide that no child may be legally employed unless he has been given "an age-and-school certificate." In this way it should be impossible for the child to find employment without the approval of the school authorities.

Under the Illinois law, the age-and-school certificate must be issued at a place provided by the school authorities and either by a person designated by the superintendent of schools or by the principal of a parochial school. The law provides further that the certificate shall be granted only when satisfactory proof of age, such as would be afforded by a birth or baptismal certificate, a school census or such school records as would offer adequate testimony, has been produced. In the absence of such recorded evidence, it is required that the parents make oath before the Juvenile or County Court that the child is fourteen years of age.

limit is really only fourteen. In Ohio, girls must attend school until they reach the age of sixteen, and boys until they are fifteen. Under certain conditions attendance may be required of boys from fifteen to sixteen. In general, therefore, it appears that Ohio is the only state in which the compulsory school age has been raised beyond fourteen without exemptions, and in six states only, including the two southern states which have no compulsory laws, is the age limit lower than fourteen years. Unfortunately, these state laws vary in their effectiveness since very inadequate provision for their enforcement exists in some of the states, particularly those in the South. In Florida, for example, the law is optional with each "special tax school district, school board district, or county," which may determine by an election held on petition of "one-fourth of the registered white votes" whether or not the law is to be operative in that particular jurisdiction. It is gratifying to add that since this volume went to the printer, the exigencies of the presidential campaign have led to the passage of the federal Child Labor bill, which, although it cannot compel the states to keep their children in school, can at any rate fairly effectively prohibit their going to work, which is of course the chief reason for the refusal to make compulsory education effective.

Unfortunately, the provision in the Illinois law relating to working papers does not yet adequately safeguard the child's right to be kept in school until he reaches the age of fourteen. Evidence is not lacking to show that in Chicago, at the present time, some children who are not fourteen receive age-and-school certificates; and others go to work before they are fourteen without certificates. In fact, no system can be devised that will keep children in school up to the age of fourteen or any other age, until birth registration is really compulsory and every child's age is a matter of public record. Without any official record of the child's age available, mistakes easily occur. In the first place, the school may have the child's age registered incorrectly. This may occur in several ways. There can be no question that many parents, who are anxious that their children should become wage-earners at the earliest possible moment, deliberately plan to evade the law and to enter their children at school as seven when they are only five or six. In such cases, when the parents claim that the child is fourteen and ask for his working papers, the school records show that the child is entitled to go to work and the age-and-school certificate is issued. Sometimes the mother acts more innocently and enters the child as five when he is only three or four, in order that he may go to kindergarten and leave her free to work; or she enters him as seven when he is younger in order that he may attend the full session instead of the half-day session provided for younger children. If the child is not "restored" to his proper age before he is nominally fourteen, it is only too easy for him to claim his working papers. The woman who is most anxious to be relieved of the care of her children is usually the woman who is obliged to go out to work because of the death, desertion, or delinquency of her husband. In such cases the same pressure that leads the mother to register the child as seven in order to provide for his care will also lead her to take advantage of the opportunity to evade

the law which this early registration has given her, and she is not likely to forget that she will be able to continue to deceive the school authorities and to get an age-and-school certificate for the child when he is only twelve.

Working papers are not issued exclusively by the school authorities. In the section of the law dealing with "proof of age" it is provided that, when evidence cannot be obtained from "the last school census, the certificate of birth or baptism of such child, the register of birth of such child with a town or city clerk, or by the records of the public or parochial schools, ... in cases wherein the above proof is not obtainable, the parent or guardian of the child shall make oath before the Juvenile or County Court as to the age of such child and the court may issue to such child an age certificate as sworn to." In Chicago, such certificates were issued for ten years in the County Court, and a very considerable number of children each year obtained certificates by means of a false affidavit from their parents. There can be no question regarding the purpose of this provision. It was intended to provide for the cases of families which had recently arrived in Chicago with children fourteen or fifteen years old who could not get certificates from the Chicago schools. Such children should, of course, be made to produce some evidence of age; thus children from other cities could obtain a statement from the last school attended; immigrant children could show their passport, or, still better, copies of their birth records might be obtained. But the bailiff of the County Court was obviously too busy to give the time needed for such details; other business seems more pressing, detailed inquiries regarding proof of age seem impossible, and the general method had been to issue the certificate and to get rid of the weeping family. The situation was improved when the Illinois Consumers' League placed a special investigator at the service of the court, but in the necessary absence of the investigator from court, the bailiff continued to issue certificates on affidavits.

Such was the situation when this investigation was undertaken. Some months later, however, when the Juvenile Court was moved from the West Side to the building in which the County Court sits, it was possible to persuade the county judge that rendering this service for children fell more properly within the scope and the purpose of the Juvenile Court and that the children could easily be sent up to that court. The change has been most beneficial. A skilled investigator has been in charge of all the applicants for such certificates, a thorough search for some record of the child's age is made, and until such record can be found the certificate is withheld.

In a large city like Chicago that is fortunate enough to have a good charity organization society many cases of working papers obtained for children under fourteen will be discovered through the relief records. When a family first applies for help the dates of birth of all the children are carefully entered in the "case record," and it is not easy at this time to give incorrect ages. Moreover, the younger the children are, the more appealing is the distress of the applicants, and therefore there is every reason why the age should not be overstated. Later, when one of the children goes to work illegally, a resourceful charity visitor in the neighborhood may, as a result of suspicion aroused by the old record, succeed in finding the evidence that will serve to return the child to school. Many examples of work of this kind may be found in the district offices of the United Charities of Chicago. Thus, in one district, an Italian family that applied for help in 1909 said that their youngest child was ten years old and gave a date of birth which properly related to the dates given for the older children in the family. Two years later, the youngest child, then twelve years old according to the case record, came into the office with an age-and-school certificate and asked that someone help her to find work. She had already been working in a box factory for several weeks, earning $2.50 a week, but she said

that she did not get on very well and had been told that she was too slow. The child had attended four different public schools in Chicago and one parochial school, and an age-and-school certificate had finally been issued from the parochial school. She had attended school very irregularly, and the date of her birth had been given differently in each school. The agent of the charity organization society noted that the record showed that the family had moved to Chicago from Omaha, where all the children had been born. A visit to the mother gave the name of the church in Omaha where the children had been baptized; and a letter to the secretary of a similar agency in Omaha, asking that the church be located and copies of the baptismal record be obtained, brought back proof that the child was only twelve years old. The factory inspector was notified, and the age-and-school certificate withdrawn, and the child was returned to school under the supervision of the Department of Compulsory Education. It is important to note, however, that this violation of the compulsory law was discovered through a private agency and almost by accident and that the proof of age which brought about the return of the child to school was secured by the same private agency. There must, of course, be many similar cases in which the unfortunate child continues at work.

Sometimes, in fact, the children distinguish between their "working age" and their "real age." And the fact that evasions of the law like those described are not exceptional was indicated by a search through the records of some of the other district offices of the same society, which brought to light similar cases of the issuance of age-and-school certificates because the child's age had been incorrectly given at school and no other record was easily available. The social worker, however, who is accustomed to searching for such facts is often more resourceful in the face of what seems to be a blank wall than the public official accustomed to a less difficult routine existence. The

public official, moreover, is handicapped by the fact that he must accept the information which the law defines as affording "evidence" of age and he is given no authority to determine by tedious inquiry from outside sources the quality of the evidence that is offered.

Other cases similar to the one given might be cited. In one case in which a family had applied for help in 1911, a visitor calling at the house a few months later found that the boy whose age had been given as twelve had gone to work. It was discovered that the age given by the child at school was different from the age given by the mother in the charity office, and it was also learned that the family had lived in Chicago for eleven years and that the boy had been born and baptized in Denver. A letter to the Denver charity organization office brought a copy of the baptismal register showing that the mother had given the correct age in the office and the wrong age both in the school and at the age-and-school certificate bureau. When the mother was seen again, she said that she had given his age incorrectly because she was tired of helping him and wanted him to help her. She explained, however, that she was much "put out" to find that the boy did not "keep his jobs" after she had got a certificate for him, but loafed and hung about cheap theaters instead. To avoid a return to school, the boy then ran away from home, but was found by the Department of Compulsory Education and placed in the Parental School.

There is also the interesting case of Rosie L———, a little Italian girl for whom a scholarship has now been provided so that she may learn dressmaking in the Hull-House Trade School. Rosie was fourteen years old on January 15, 1916, but she left school to go to work in January, 1914. When asked how she got her certificate, she said that she had told the sister in the parochial school that she was fourteen and had got her school certificate in this way. The little girl is the eldest of seven children, all of whom are still under school age, and she felt that

she ought to help her mother because her father was dead. The work history of this child, who was just fourteen years of age, was traced as follows. She left school at the age of twelve and had been "fitter and packer" in a large shipping department for six months, but she found the work so hard and she had to carry such heavy packages that she left when she was told that she could get lighter work in a bookbindery. The bindery job lasted only two weeks, however, and she was then laid off and went back to her first position again and worked there nine months longer. She then was told, evidently by a child working in the same place, that she could earn more money if she claimed to be sixteen. She then got a position in a printing establishment and did earn very good wages indeed by claiming to be sixteen years old, although she was not yet fourteen. When she was laid off, however, she did not find it so easy to get work again and conditions at home with no other wage-earner in the family were very hard indeed, so that Rosie finally applied to a neighboring settlement for help in finding work, an application which has finally placed her in the way of learning a trade.

Sometimes the children are put to work without any papers. There are always to be found a few employers who are willing to take the risk of being discovered by the factory inspector. These are usually the heads of establishments in which there is difficulty in getting "help" because of undesirable conditions of work, and it is, of course, a double misfortune that a child should not only lose the minimum of schooling that is his due but also begin his working-life under the worst possible conditions. It is also a serious matter that in such cases the child leaves school and goes to work, conscious of the fact that his parents have sworn falsely as to his age and that he will, if he succeeds in evading the law, have to lie to the factory inspectors from time to time as he has probably already lied to his teacher and his principal.

A serious defect in the law which makes it easier for children to work without certificates is the fact that no certificate or proof of age is required of the child over sixteen years of age. It is therefore possible for a fairly well-grown child who may not even be fourteen to claim to be sixteen and to obtain employment in industries and under conditions prohibited by the child labor law for children under sixteen. In fact, the child under fourteen may simply disappear from the school records and forfeit in this way several months or even years of the required period of schooling.

The only remedy for this situation is an amendment to the child labor law requiring all minors to have certificates. Such a provision is necessary for the protection of employers as well as for the children. Careful employers may protect themselves by looking at the child's old certificate if it has not been destroyed, but this is the only protection. It is true, of course, that children who are exceptionally small for their age cannot claim to be older than they are, but children "large for their age" and even those of normal size are able to defeat the compulsory law simply by going to work without working papers.

The case of Mary G——— is a typical one. Mary applied for assistance in finding work at the office of a social agency, saying that she had just passed her sixteenth birthday, that she had worked five months in one laundry, feeding a mangle. She had then worked in another laundry, also feeding a mangle. After this she had worked in several department stores. She was questioned with regard to her work on the mangle, which is classified as one of the "dangerous occupations" prohibited by the child labor law for children under sixteen, and she said in reply that she had told the boss that she was sixteen because she had been told that girls under sixteen could not find work. She admitted that she had never obtained an age-and-school certificate, but she

claimed that she had not left school until the day she was fourteen, had found it easy to get a job in a laundry, and just went to work and worked until she got sick. Her illness caused her to leave her work in the second laundry. When the school that she had last attended was visited, the principal of the school merely said that they had "simply lost track of her." The school records showed that Mary was born April 17, 1899; and as she had gone to work in June, 1911, she had therefore left school when only twelve and had lost two whole years of the schooling to which the law entitled her. Her home was visited, and the child then admitted that she had gone to work when she was only twelve against her family's wishes, but since she found it perfectly easy to get a job she saw no reason why she should not do so. The girl had no father, but an older brother (aged eighteen) was working in the stockyards and an older sister (aged twenty-three) was a telephone operator, so that Mary's earnings were not urgently needed in the family. The comparatively simple requirement that age-and-school certificates should not be destroyed when the boy or girl becomes sixteen or that a new certificate be issued and that all minors be required to present working papers would protect a very considerable number of children who are now being deprived of the benefits of the compulsory education law.

Other children are lost track of in the same way. Such was the case of Helen M———. Helen was born January 6, 1900, and left school in 1911, when she was in the fourth grade. In January, 1914, she was granted a certificate by a parochial school and in October asked for help in finding work. At that time she said that she did not know the name of the school she had attended. She had left school three years before, had just stayed at home and helped her mother, and when she was fourteen got a certificate and began to help support the family. She had worked in a tailor shop for two weeks and earned $1.50

a week pulling bastings, but she later got a job in a candy factory during the busy season for $4 a week. She was laid off in a month, but was lucky enough to find work in another candy factory for a fortnight, but after that she was unable to go any farther. There seemed to be "no more jobs anywhere" for a child so ignorant and so untrained.

A similar case is that of Theresa C———, who claimed to be fourteen and left school on the day on which, according to the school record, she was only twelve. She had been in this country nine months and when she left school was in the third grade. The school principal refused to sign an employment certificate, but she had learned that if she claimed to be sixteen she could probably get work without a certificate. Although she was a small child and did not look older than twelve, she found work in a fashionable dressmaking establishment for two months, and then in a large department store for three months. At the latter place she was "laid off" because the factory inspector came around and questioned her right to work. The school seemed to have made no effort to have her returned, but the social worker to whom she applied for assistance in finding "another job" got her returned to school; and she is there now waiting until a letter can be obtained from Italy with a copy of her birth record.

The serious aspect of this situation lies not only in the fact of the child's loss of schooling but in the encouragement of false statements made to deceive both employer and factory inspector. One little girl who spoke quite innocently of her "real age" and her "working age" seemed, in company with many others, to have no sense of wrong-doing. She was trying to help a sorely pressed family and merely regretted that the difficulties placed in her way by the law had to be overcome by misstatements. Yet the moral effect must be harmful to the child who is compelled to lie in order to get work and finds it profitable to do so.

Another loophole through which children seem to escape from school before the compulsory age limit has been reached is by graduation from the eighth grade. The Illinois law does not exempt from school attendance the children who finish the elementary school before their fourteenth birthday. Legally such children are required to attend the free public high schools or some other school until the fourteenth birthday has been reached. But when a child feels that because he has graduated from the eighth grade he is entitled to a certificate, he seems to find it not too difficult to go to work anyway. Such was the case of Henry F———, who graduated from the elementary school seven months before his fourteenth birthday. In this case the boy, who was very large and tall, got a job for the summer and then decided that he would not return to school, as he should have done in September under the compulsory school law. He had never attended a parochial school, but he got a certificate from the school connected with the church where he had been confirmed. In spite of the fact that he had a certificate he found that he could get a better job by not using it and by saying that he was sixteen years old. The factory inspector discovered that he was not sixteen, and he was discharged, but by that time he had reached his fourteenth birthday and therefore could not be compelled to return to school. This case and several similar ones that have come to notice are instances of peculiar wastefulness, since the children are unusually bright and ambitious and likely to come from homes in which their earnings are not necessary.

An adequate compulsory education law should contain not only a statement concerning the age at which the child may legally leave school to go to work but also provisions requiring that the child meet physical and educational tests of fitness to work. Neither the Illinois child labor law nor the compulsory education law contains a provision requiring that the child be shown to be physically fit before his working papers are issued.

The Illinois child labor law which was enacted in 1893 contained a clause providing that a factory inspector might require a certificate of physical fitness from a physician of good standing if a child who was found at work appeared physically unable to do the work at which he was engaged. Mrs. Kelley was chief factory inspector at the time, and an attempt was made to use this clause. It was, however, found to be unenforceable.[1] No appropriation is made for the payment of medical fees, and without this, proper certificates cannot be obtained. If certifying physicians are not appointed and any doctor is allowed to issue certificates, a physician can always be found who for the sake of a fee is willing to certify that any child is physically fit for work. Although this provision of the child labor law has never been repealed, no one of Mrs. Kelley's successors has repeated her attempts to enforce it, and although our Illinois Child Labor law still contains a provision that a child who is found in an occupation for which he is physically unfit should not be left working in that occupation by the inspecting officer, the provision was and is a dead letter. At present, children who are physically handicapped in every way are given working papers, and they cannot legally be prevented from working at occupations which are exceedingly dangerous for them. It is true that the child labor law prohibits any child between fourteen and sixteen from working at a "dangerous occupation," but of course this means only occupations dangerous for a normal child, not for a child with weak heart, weak lungs or other physical disability.

Among children who are granted employment certificates are children who have been too ill to attend school regularly, children who are lame and crippled, children with heart disease, and tubercular children who have been in the open-air schools, which are maintained at heavy expense for the sake of bringing

[1] See *ante*, chap. v, "Parallel Development of Child Labor and Education Laws," p. 73, and Appendix III, p. 403.

these children up to a proper standard of physical fitness. The wastefulness of granting working certificates to children who have just come out of special open-air schools is obvious. At the present time in spite of all the additional care and expense that have been devoted to these children by the Board of Education and the private agency assisting in this work, the law allows them to walk out of the open-air schools on their fourteenth birthday and to go to work in occupations that are almost certain to be injurious to them. Indeed, there seems to be no suitable employment available for an open-air school child between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Some form of outdoor employment would no doubt be best, yet often this work requires the carrying of heavy packages and it is usually "blind-alley" work. There can be no question as to the importance of requiring these children to remain in school at least until the sixteenth birthday, instead of allowing them to find "jobs" that many of them are in the long run not able to hold. A few cases which follow will throw some light on this problem.

Katie I——— finished the fifth grade in the open-air school. She was the youngest in a family of two children, and as soon as she got her working papers she found a job in a peanut factory, where she shelled peanuts at a rate of ten cents for every three pounds. She was, however, still going to the hospital twice a week to have her lungs examined. She left the factory after a few weeks because the ventilation was poor and she was compelled to stoop continuously in her work. The "forelady" told her that she had better give up the work. Her next position was a "scab-job" in a tailor shop, sewing pants. She got this position during a strike, and a policeman escorted her to work every day. She found, of course, that conditions of work were no more favorable here than in the other place.

Jake S———, the oldest of five children, finished the sixth grade in the open-air school. His father was a janitor and worked regularly but thought that Jake ought to "help," since

he was old enough to work. Jake worked as a department store wagon boy for two years, and then left because he could not get his wages raised. His next job was that of elevator boy in a downtown building, where he worked for six months. He was sick and "the boss fired him." Then he got a job in a factory, but was discharged at the end of the first week because he was not strong enough to do the work. He next worked as delivery boy for a department store, but he had to carry heavy boxes of groceries upstairs; so the work proved too heavy for him and he left.

Morris R——— finished the fifth grade in the open-air school at the age of fourteen. He had been in this country only four years. His first position was in a tailor shop, where he worked for one year, but finally left because the steam in the shop made him sick.

Henry W——— left the open-air school at fourteen, having finished the sixth grade. His first job was in a drug store, where he worked as errand boy. He held this position for two and a half years, and was then laid off. He next worked as errand boy for a ready-made clothing concern, but at the end of six months the firm failed. Then he worked in a wholesale house for two and a half years, but the dust in the room where he worked was bad for him, and the manager advised him to leave on account of his physical condition and to find out-of-door employment. He was then twenty years of age and was faced with the difficult problem of finding "light work."

Chris J——— left the open-air school when he was fourteen. His first job was with a contractor for whom he worked as water boy for two months. He then found a new place as water boy for another contractor and worked for another month. He was then "out of a job" and found work tossing bricks, clearly an unsuitable place for any boy even if he had not been in the open-air school.

Elsie B——— finished the sixth grade in the open-air school at the age of fourteen. Her father was dead, and as she was the oldest of four children the mother insisted that she leave school and go to work. Her first position was in an ice-cream cone factory, where she earned $2.50 a week, but working conditions in the factory were bad, and she was unable to keep the position more than two or three weeks. She was fortunate in coming under the observation of the school nurse who sent her to a social agency for advice. A scholarship was then provided so that she might go to the Hull-House Trade School and not be sent back to work until she was older and stronger.

Another group of children whose physical condition frequently makes it unsuitable for them to go to work are the children of the women who are receiving "widows' pensions" from the Juvenile Court. The court has set a high standard of relief and of care for these children, but in general they are in a very anaemic condition when they come under the care of the court, probably because of privation during their father's illness. These children are all examined by a physician, and although not physically incapacitated they are underfed and frequently undersized and too weak for any of the "jobs" that are available for them. It is, however, illegal for the court to grant any money for the care of any child after his fourteenth birthday, when the law permits him to go to work.

While excellent work has been done recently by the Bureau of Employment Supervision through its Volunteer Scholarship Committee by securing the return to school and special vocational training for delicate children, this committee can at best meet the needs of only a small proportion of the children needing care. A study of their scholarship cases would indicate, however, the great importance of requiring that all children who go to work must meet certain tests of physical fitness. For example, a little girl of fourteen who had been out of school with St. Vitus dance for two or three years before her fourteenth birth-

day, but claimed a working permit a fortnight after she was fourteen, asserting that she was "well now," was referred to this committee. The child's earnings were so much needed in the home that a scholarship was provided as the only means of keeping her from unsuitable work. Another fourteen-year-old girl, small for her age, had been in the sixth grade seventy-two weeks. The mother said that the child evidently could not learn and there was no use in sending her to school any longer. An examination showed that the child was subnormal, not mentally but physically. The Department of Child-Study reported that she had only the strength of a normal child of twelve, that she was in bad physical condition, and that she should not go to work under any circumstances. It was, however, just an accident that this child was taken to the department for examination, whereas such a report should be required for every child who is leaving school to claim an employment certificate. Nothing can be satisfactory except the systematic examination of every child and a compulsory return to school or to some agency that can provide proper treatment for every child physically unfit for work.

Adequate child labor and compulsory education laws should provide not only that the child who leaves school to go to work should have reached a minimum standard of physical fitness, but also a minimum standard of education. Unfortunately the present Illinois law prescribes no educational qualification for the school-leaving child except an absolutely inadequate and unenforceable provision that if he "cannot read at sight and write legibly simple sentences" the certificate shall be issued only on condition that he is regularly attending an evening school. The law further provides that when there are no evening schools in session, age-and-school certificates shall not be issued to children who cannot meet the reading and writing requirements. Unfortunately, for reasons which will be discussed later, the evening school provision is practically a dead letter.

The educational test prescribed—that of being able "to read at sight and write legibly simple sentences"—would, even if it were enforced, be a wholly inadequate one. And it is important to note that in this matter of establishing a minimum standard of education that must be attained before a child is permitted to leave school Illinois is shockingly behind other states. In New York, for example, a child must not only be able to read and to write simple sentences *in English* (important words omitted in the Illinois law) but must also have a knowledge of fractions. In practice, it is held that this means that a child must have completed the fifth grade. In Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio, and several other states the educational test is equally high or higher, but Illinois has been content to lag behind without attempting to keep its illiterate minors in school.

It is important to note, too, that slight as is the educational test provided, this test is not given to children when they apply for certificates. The statute provides that "the certificate of the principal of a public or parochial school shall be prima facie evidence as to the literacy or illiteracy of the child." It is assumed, of course, that principals will give certificates only to children who have attended their schools, but practice varies with the type of principal in charge. For example, two boys named K———, belonging to a Polish family that had moved to Chicago from Canada, obtained certificates from a public-school principal although they had not attended his school. A social worker who was investigating the case because there seemed some good reason for believing that at least one of the boys was under fourteen expressed surprise that the principal should have issued certificates to children who had not been members of his school. The principal said that he did not usually do this, but that when children had "a hard-luck story, especially last winter," he had given some certificates to boys whom he had examined in his office and considered "worthy" of certifi-

cates. In this case, the boys could not be proved to be under age and therefore their certificates could not be canceled. But there was equally no proof that they were old enough to work; they were in fact so illiterate and incompetent that they were in work very little of the time, and were becoming demoralized by idleness and bad company.

A somewhat similar case is that of Salvatore C———, a little boy who was lame and a hunchback, but who had left school when he was only twelve years and nine months old. This child was sent to the Juvenile Court for employment by the principal of an elementary school. A lady had found the child on the street and had taken him into the nearest school to see if the principal could do anything for him. Though the boy had never attended this school, the principal gave him a certificate and then sent him on to the Juvenile Court to see if a probation officer could not find work for him. The principal of the school, when questioned about the child's age and school record, said that Salvatore had been brought in to him by a lady who said that the boy was in need. He issued the certificate as a matter of accommodation after finding that the boy could read and write "a little."

The children who are given age-and-school certificates fall into two groups: those who have been attending school in Chicago prior to the granting of a certificate and whose illiteracy should be a matter of school record and those who come from outside of Chicago and who have no school certificates to present at the "issuing bureau" as evidence of their right to employment certificates. But whether a child comes from the Chicago schools or not, there is no way under the law of keeping him in school if he is unable to meet the "reading or writing test." The Chicago child, for example, who is in the first grade and who is therefore presumably illiterate can under the law be granted a working certificate only if he brings a certificate showing that he has enrolled in evening school, and thereafter

his working certificate is to continue in force only as long as the child's regular attendance at evening school is certified weekly by the teacher and the principal. But the law makes no provision regarding the person to whom the report is to be made. The issuing bureau has been in charge of a civil service clerk[1] who has no follow-up machinery and, knowing that the evening school provision cannot be, in general, enforced takes no notice of it. The illiteracy provision is therefore practically a dead letter. Sometimes a school principal refuses a certificate to an illiterate child, but he is probably acting illegally when he does so. And in general the child or the parents find some way of getting the desired paper. For example, an Italian boy, Peter G———, who had been in this country three years, was in the third grade at the end of the school term in June. He was not fourteen until the following October, but did not return to school in September because he found a job carrying water for a railroad gang. Later when he tried to get a work certificate, the principal of the school refused to give him one on the ground that he had not had enough schooling. The boy refused to return to school, however, and enrolled in the evening class of another elementary school and got a certificate from the evening school principal. When he applied to a social agency for assistance in finding a "job," he had been out of work for nearly a year. He had never been to school in Italy, he could not read or write in Italian, he could not understand anything but very

[1] It seems hardly necessary to point out that a position which brings the official into such close contact with children and parents at a critical moment in their experience should be filled by a person of dignity and competence. Under the circumstances the Board of Education would do well to place in charge of the issuing bureau a person taken from the group of intelligent and successful principals in whom the children would feel confidence, on whose judgment the parents could look with respect. Such a person could render great service to the other principals by calling their attention to the importance of the part they play in giving the children the preliminary statement of educational requirements.

simple English words, he could not read English, and could write only his name. What a preparation for American life! Moreover, in such cases, the sacrifice of the child's schooling is made in vain. He leaves school to go to work, but he cannot find work. He finds that his employment certificate, which he had obtained with so much difficulty, is of no assistance to him, and he soon becomes discouraged and demoralized. The case of Peter G——— was discovered when the family applied to the United Charities for help. The father had been ill for two months, the boy, Peter, had had no work for nearly twelve months, and no one else in the family was working.

The cases that have been given show that there is no literacy test enforced in Chicago at the present time as a prerequisite to the issue of working papers. This is, moreover, a matter of public record. Table XXXI shows the grade last attended by the children who were given employment certificates when they left the public schools. A study of this table, which

TABLE XXXI

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN SPECIFIED GRADES RECEIVING AGE-AND-SCHOOL CERTIFICATES FROM CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1904–7, 1909, 1912–14

YEAR ENDING JUNE 30*	GRADE									EVENING SCHOOL	UNCLASSIFIED (INCLUDING DUPLICATES)	TOTAL
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth	Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth			
1914....	30	58	252	695	1,584	2,347	2,633	4,034	919	70	1,011	13,633
1913....	15	56	203	756	1,622	2,396	2,561	3,257	621	56	1,040	12,583
1912....	27	57	259	727	1,816	2,521	2,647	3,204	856	20	1,169	13,303
1909....	32	102	348	1,075	2,073	2,579	2,433	2,378	770	33	815	12,638
1907....	10	111	332	1,002	1,917	2,396	2,146	2,956	464	57	284	11,675
1906....	3	82	302	941	2,030	2,492	2,115	2,131	389	63	87	10,635
1905....	7	106	249	981	2,174	2,502	2,355	2,418	488	80	182	11,542
1904....	5	88	563	1,294	2,978	2,722	2,514	3,111	493	64	455	14,287
	129	660	2,508	7,471	16,194	19,955	19,404	23,489	5,000	443	5,043	100,296

*Data for the years 1908, 1910, 1911, are not given in the Board of Education reports.

covers a period of eight years and shows the grades reached by more than one hundred thousand working children indicates only too plainly that, in general, certificates are issued without any reference to the educational progress of the children who apply for them.

According to this table, in the eight years for which information is given, there have been 129 certificates issued to first-grade children, 660 to second-grade children, 2,508 to third-grade children, and 7,471 to fourth-grade children. The school records show, then, that during a period of eight years more than ten thousand children who have not reached the fifth grade in school were given working papers and that during the last school year for which information is available more than a thousand such certificates were issued. Unfortunately, there are no similar records of certificates issued by parochial schools; but since these schools have a larger proportion of foreign children than the public schools, it is to be expected that their children would be more, rather than less, illiterate than the children from the public schools.

It is to be hoped that the next Illinois legislature will not shirk the task of prescribing tests both of physical development and of educational qualifications which will prevent the early exhaustion of these young wage-earners and at the same time lay the foundations for a more competent citizenship. The following changes in the Illinois compulsory education law are suggested as necessary if the purpose of the law is to be fulfilled and the issuance of working papers is really to safeguard the upper limit of the compulsory age.

1. *The abolition of local control over the issuance of working certificates and the substitution of a central authority acting through a state bureau or department.*—Under the present system in Illinois which leaves the local educational authorities all over the state free to be as lax as they please with regard to the enforcement of the compulsory law, the law will never be ade-

quately enforced. Difficulties arise first because the local boards of education are frequently lax and indifferent, and secondly because any supervision of the issuing of certificates by parochial and other private schools is, as matters stand, impossible. At present, the state law lays down certain requirements that must be met before a child shall be granted working papers, but the state provides no department and no officials to see that the provisions of this law are enforced. If the issuing of the employment certificates were in the hands of a state department of education, then public and private schools alike would be under the supervision of a competent central authority. In the recent valuable study of the Connecticut employment certificate system by the Children's Bureau it is pointed out that

> the strongest single feature of the Connecticut system and, indeed, the source of most of its other strong features, seems to be the centralization of control over the entire procedure relating to certificates throughout the state in the hands of the state board of education. . . . . Every child who obtains an employment certificate in Connecticut passes substantially the same test of his qualifications, and every child has substantially the same chance of receiving the actual protection of the law.

The report adds that

> centralization of control over the issuing and the refusing of certificates as well as over inspection tends to efficiency in enforcement as well as to uniformity in standards.

There may be some question as to how far the state factory inspectors may serve as a unifying force, but as to their inability to enforce satisfactorily an employment certificate system there can be no question. The factory inspector's method must be that of inspection of industrial establishments, and this system can never adequately protect the working child. It is interesting to note that the investigators of the Children's

Bureau who studied the employment certificate system say emphatically that

industrial inspection is only one method of enforcing the law and is probably destined to decrease in importance as methods of locating and following up children are improved.

Furthermore, that while

industrial inspection seems to be essential in the absence of a complete and permanent census of all children subject to legal regulation[1] . . . . it can never be an efficient method of enforcing a child labor law, for children may be here today and there tomorrow and the cost of inspecting all industrial establishments often enough to locate such unstable elements is prohibitory. Therefore the problem of enforcing a child labor law must, like the problem of enforcing a compulsory education law, be approached from the side of the individual child, and school attendance officers must be authorized to go, at their discretion, wherever children go, even if this power means a certain amount of double inspection of industrial establishments. If a state child labor law is to be thoroughly enforced, some state agency must keep a record of the whereabouts of every child in the state, whether at school or at work.

[1] Children's Bureau Publication. *Employment Certificate System in Connecticut*, by Sumner and Hanks, pp. 50–51.

Although the Connecticut law is vastly superior to the Illinois law both as to the requirements set for working papers and as to the means of enforcement, nevertheless the Children's Bureau investigators found serious defects in the Connecticut system which are of interest, since they also exist in our Illinois system. Thus it is pointed out in connection with the statements quoted above: "At present the State Board of Education of Connecticut has, at least theoretically, such a record of all children who are not in school. There are, however, two glaring sources of incompleteness in these records, first, that children engaged in agricultural and domestic pursuits are not included, and, second, that there is no efficient method of registering newcomers to the state. Children are not obliged to have employment certificates to engage in farm and domestic labor. This means not only that children leaving school to go to work in these occupations pass no educational test and are not obliged to fulfil any educational requirements, but also that the names of such children are not on

2. *Proof of age.*—The present Illinois law fails to protect the upper limit of the compulsory period because no satisfactory proof of age is required before a work certificate is issued. The only satisfactory evidence of age is, of course, a copy of the child's birth record, and the issuing of employment certificates cannot be properly protected until an adequate system of birth registration is enforced not only in Illinois, but in other American states. An adequate vital statistics law was passed at the last session of the Illinois legislature, and the state can require fourteen years hence that, before the issuance of an employment certificate, native-born children must submit copies of their birth records. Until that time arrives, the best evidence of age is that furnished by the school records. Greater care, however, should be taken when the certificate is applied for, to learn the child's correct age, that is, the age given at the time he first enrolled in school, and not the age recently assumed in order to obtain a certificate to which he is not entitled. For foreign-born children, copies of birth records should also be required; and since European systems of birth registration are so uniformly superior to our own, this documentary proof of age could easily be obtained. Since the parents are often so ignorant and helpless in the matter of correspondence,[1] a public

the records of the state board of education. Even if this loophole in the law is not generally known or made use of except in country districts, some record of these children should be kept, it would seem, by the state board in order to prevent their drifting into industrial labor without certificates. As for the registration of newcomers to the State, the school census, even if thoroughly and efficiently handled for that end—which in the absence of any central control is not by any means always the case—is not taken often enough to accomplish the purpose."

[1] The report of the Children's Bureau on the Connecticut employment certificate system, which has already been referred to, makes the following comment on this point: "If a foreign-born child has a passport or other similar paper, he is not obliged to send for another documentary proof of his age; but if he cannot produce such a paper his parent is told to write to the place where he was born for a birth certificate. The agents do not

official might well be required to send the necessary letters abroad asking for copies of the birth-records of immigrant children.

Leaving the question of the method of issuing certificates and the question of enforcing such standards as are prescribed, these standards should themselves be discussed. A good compulsory school law ought to provide that no child shall be given a certificate allowing him to leave school to go to work unless he had reached a minimum standard of age, education, and physical development.

3. *Minimum age.*—The minimum school-leaving age should be sixteen years instead of fourteen as prescribed in the present Illinois law. This subject is, however, discussed at length in the following chapter and will not be considered here.

4. *Minimum standard of education.*—It has been pointed out in the foregoing pages that the present Illinois law contains an absurdly inadequate educational standard, and that even this low standard is not enforced. The minimum standard should not only include reading with facility and "writing legibly," but the words "in English," so sorely needed in our present law, should be added. This minimum educational standard should also include a knowledge of arithmetic up to

state to whom the child or his parent should write; require no evidence such as a registry receipt that a letter has been written; and demand no proof later, when the child or parent returns claiming that the birth record cannot be obtained, that such is actually the case. . . . . While waiting the receipt of a foreign birth record or a communication stating that it cannot be obtained, the child is not allowed to work but must go to school" (p. 20).

Further comment on the present practice in Connecticut is made as follows: "Birth registration, it is well known, is more complete in most European countries than in the United States, and copies of birth certificates can very generally be obtained for foreign-born children, provided application is made to the proper official and the regular fee is sent. Often, however, parents know neither to whom they should write nor the amount of money to send, and if left undirected they sometimes write to relatives and sometimes, even if they write to the proper official, fail to send the fee" (p. 40).

and including fractions. Such a requirement would virtually insist on the completion of the fifth grade, which is indeed a minimum of education for the electorate of a democracy! In Illinois, in eight years for which records are available, more than 10,000 children who had not reached the fifth grade had been allowed to leave school to go to work, and 16,194 other children were in the fifth grade at the time of receiving their papers.

Another essential requirement is that school records should not be accepted as a proof of educational fitness. The law should provide for the giving of an educational test by the issuing bureau in addition to the principal's certificate, and it has already been recommended that this bureau should be placed under state control. On this point again the investigations of the Children's Bureau with regard to the working of the Connecticut employment system have been most illuminating. The Connecticut law provides that "in order to obtain an employment certificate a child must be able to read with facility, to write legibly simple sentences, and to perform the operations of the fundamental rules of arithmetic with relation both to whole numbers and to fractions." This Connecticut standard, which is virtually a fifth-grade requirement, was found by the investigators of the Children's Bureau to be lowered by the method of enforcement.

On this point, their report says:

> Fifth-grade school records are accepted in lieu of the test in practically all cities and towns, except Hartford, where large numbers of children are employed, and teachers or principals who wish to get rid of backward or troublesome children may therefore be able to promote them out of school into industry. . . . . In many other places this is practically impossible, it is claimed, as promotions are made twice a year as the result of examinations which are checked up in the office of the superintendent of schools. No such check is placed upon private schools, and the state board of education itself uses no method of detecting unearned promotions. The records of

applicants might be examined; but this would be a laborious process as compared with the simple expedient of requiring every child to take an educational test regardless of the grade in school—a procedure which is unquestionably authorized by the law.

It may be said, then, that the investigation of the Children's Bureau has made it perfectly clear that an educational standard is of little value unless it is enforced by an impartial authority outside of the school system and enforced on the basis of an examination given to the children who are applicants for certificates and not on the basis of reports handed in by local school authorities.

Something should perhaps be said about the mentally deficient children who can never reach even a low educational minimum. Whether or not such children should be permanently under the custody of the state in an educational institution is a question to be discussed by experts. But it is only too obvious that in any event mentally defective children should not be put to work during their minority.[1]

5. *Minimum standard of physical development.*—Not only should the state require that every child should have reached a minimum standard of education before working papers are issued, but it should also demand that children should meet a certain standard of physical fitness for work and that their condition should be certified by examining physicians appointed by the educational authorities.[2]

[1] The report of the Children's Bureau says with regard to the present treatment of these children under the Connecticut law: "No provision is made in the law for the exemption of mentally defective children from the educational requirements. If unable to finish the grade requirement or pass the educational test these children must stay in school until they are sixteen years of age, even though they may be unable to make any progress in the subjects taught" (p. 41).

[2] A recent valuable monograph on *Mental and Physical Measurements of Working Children*, by Woolley and Fischer (Psychological Monographs,

6. *Requirement that children must be at work or in school.*—Finally no employment certificate should be issued until the child has an acceptable promise of immediate employment that can be verified by the school authorities.

This last requirement, which would prevent the waste and the demoralization that now result from the child's tramping about in search of work, will, however, be discussed in the next chapter.

In concluding this chapter, attention should be called to the importance of keeping children in school up to the age limit

No. 77) contains the following statement as to the present status of this problem:

"There are very few instances in which any physical standards for the admission of children to industry have been adopted. The rule of the New York Board of Health that children of fourteen must be at least 4 ft. 8 in. in height and at least 80 lbs. in weight if they are to be granted working permits is perhaps the most important instance of the application of a definite physical standard. The Department of Health of the City of New York cannot be too highly commended for having taken this stand on so important an issue. We merely wish to point out that, on the basis of our results, the minimum standards of height and weight for children of fourteen years of age ought not to be the same for the two sexes. The New York standard applied to our own series of 753 fourteen-year-old working children would have excluded nine girls and twenty-seven boys—three times as many boys as girls. The New York department probably avoided this kind of injustice by the rule that any child who fell below the minimum standards of height and weight had the right of further physical examination, and might still receive his working papers if he proved thoroughly healthy in spite of his small size. A difference of standard for the two sexes, however, would obviate the necessity for some of these special examinations. For states which have a minimum age of fifteen years for entering industry, a sex difference in standards of height and weight would scarcely be necessary, since the differences at that age are much smaller than at fourteen.

"It is possible that other factors of physical development in addition to height and weight may prove to be valuable guides for the acceptance or rejection of youthful applicants for admission to industry. Such a series of measurements as we have presented when interpreted in the light of subsequent industrial histories ought to offer on this point valuable evidence" (p. 246).

prescribed by the law in a state where the age of entering school is placed as late as seven years by the compulsory law. A child who does not enter school until he is seven has, at best, only seven required years of schooling under the present law. He should not be permitted to sacrifice any of this short period of required attendance. In England, where the child is required to begin school at the age of five and in Germany and in some of our American states where compulsory attendance begins at six,[1] the period of required attendance is, of course, longer and the child who escapes before the end of the compulsory period does not sacrifice so much.

The chapter that follows will deal with the present conditions which are the result of leaving the compulsory age limit at fourteen years and attempting to regulate child labor between the ages of fourteen and sixteen.

[1] This is not the place to present arguments in favor of making the period of compulsory attendance begin at an age earlier than the seven years required in our Illinois law and quite generally in American states. Certainly in the poorer districts of our cities social workers must be impressed with the great loss to children who spend the years between five and seven in such unfavorable surroundings when they might have, if the law required it, the helpful training provided in the public school kindergartens and primary grades. The late enrolment required by our Illinois law is, of course, one explanation of the low school grade reached by so many children who receive employment certificates (see *ante*, p. 307). If for some reason it is undesirable to require parents to send their children to school at the age of five or six then there is every reason why the law should prescribe not only the attainment of a specific age but also a specific educational standard before granting exemption from compulsory attendance.

CHAPTER XX

THE NEED OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN FOURTEEN AND SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE

In the year 1907 the compulsory education law of Illinois, which had made school attendance compulsory for children between the ages of seven and fourteen years, was so amended as to include all children between the ages of seven and sixteen years. The new law provided, however, that exemption from school attendance might be granted to any child between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years whenever the child was "necessarily and lawfully employed" during the hours when the public school was in session. That is, the new law nominally made school attendance compulsory up to the age of sixteen in one sentence and in the next sentence went back to the old system and provided that children between fourteen and sixteen might be either at school or at work.

The real difficulty with the amended law of 1907 was that once more the parallel development of the child labor and the compulsory education laws had been neglected. The compulsory attendance law could not keep children in school if the child labor law permitted them to go to work. Foreseeing this complication, the authors of the 1907 amendment evidently thought that it would be practicable to make school attendance compulsory for the fourteen- to sixteen-year-old children who were not at work. In practice, however, the provision that children must be either at school or at work has proved to be an unenforceable one. In the first place there is no machinery for keeping track of children between fourteen and sixteen and of finding out whether or not the child who has been given a work certificate is or is not at work. This could be done only if the

compulsory education department or some similar agency were required to keep a register of such children and of their places of employment. In a few states, for example, an employer when he discharges a child is required to return the child's work certificate to the school authorities. When this is done, the child can be returned to school if he does not find work at once.

The Illinois child labor law unfortunately provides (sec. 20 f) that the age-and-school certificate shall be the property of the child and shall be surrendered to him when he leaves one employer to seek another. If the child fails to claim the paper within thirty days, the employer should return it to the education authority issuing it, but there is no penalty provided for the employer who fails to comply with the requirement that he return the child's working papers.

It may be said with regard to the enforcement of the provision in the Illinois law that the child between fourteen and sixteen must be either at work or at school, that at both ends of the line the law breaks down: neither in the compulsory education office nor in that of the factory inspector are there provisions for the enforcement of this requirement. Employers very rarely return uncalled-for certificates, and an additional weakness here is that employers are open to the temptation of using such a certificate for some illegally employed child.

As a matter of fact, the provision that purported to bring children between fourteen and sixteen under the compulsory education law in 1907 was on the face of it wholly inadequate. By exempting from the law all children who were lawfully employed, the provision was made incapable of enforcement. What the law seems to mean is that any child who has an employment certificate and pretends to be wanting a "job" is to be exempt from school attendance; but, again, no attempt is made to keep a record of fourteen- to sixteen-year-old children who have not taken employment certificates, and certainly many girls stay at home without them.

Another point to be discussed in connection with the statutory exemptions regarding the children between fourteen and sixteen is the provision that the children between these ages who are excused from school attendance are, in the precise words of the statute, those who are "necessarily and lawfully employed during the hours when the public school is in session," and the question must be raised as to what meaning is to be attached to the words "necessarily . . . . employed." Obviously none at all, unless some machinery is provided for investigating the home circumstances of each child who applies for a work certificate. No such machinery was provided for in the law and during the first six years after the passage of the amendment those charged with the enforcement of the law seemed to overlook the provision that children must be "necessarily employed." In an occasional instance, some principal or settlement worker might persuade a child who seemed to come from a sufficiently comfortable home in which his earnings were not needed, to return to school, but, in general, any child who reached the age of fourteen could obtain a work certificate. After the establishment of the Bureau of Employment Supervision,[1] the social workers employed there found that there were many cases of children who could be persuaded to return to school because their earnings were not needed in the home, and the waste that resulted from their leaving school automatically, as it were, on their fourteenth birthday was clearly demonstrated.

No systematic attempt on the part of the school authorities to enforce the provision of the law that children must be necessarily as well as lawfully employed if they were to be exempt from school attendance seems to have been made until June, 1913, which was nearly six years after the law was passed.

[1] See Appendix VII for an account of this bureau, which was organized in connection with this investigation into the working of the compulsory law.

Influenced possibly by the work of the Employment Supervision Bureau, the Department of Compulsory Education then placed an officer in the Age-and-School Certificate Bureau to interview all children applying for employment certificates. During the first few weeks after the close of school when literally swarms of children crowd the issuing bureau, it is of course impossible for a single officer to interview all children applying for papers, but in normal times an effort seems to be made to interview all applicants, supposedly in order to determine whether or not the child's employment is "necessary." If not "necessary," the work certificate might then be refused. In the school year 1913–14 the representative of the Department of Compulsory Education challenged the issuance of a certificate to a little girl, the child of a saloon-keeper, whose earnings were obviously not needed in the family. The child was refused a certificate, but the father in turn refused to allow her to return to school. The Department of Compulsory Education thereupon took the case into the Municipal Court and asked that the child's return to school be enforced under the compulsory law since she was not "lawfully employed." The Municipal Court judge who heard the case decided that the child must be returned to school. The father did not carry the case to a higher court, and it stands therefore as a precedent. The decision, however, seems to have been made, not on the ground that the child was unnecessarily employed, but that she was not employed at all.

More recently a bulletin has been issued from the office of the superintendent of the Chicago schools containing the following statement under the heading "Labor Certificates":

> There has been quite a measure of uncertainty relative to the spirit of the law in the issuing or withholding of labor certificates when children apply for the same. That portion of the statute which uses the expression "necessarily employed" is susceptible of more than a single interpretation. The attorney of the Board of Education believes that "the spirit of the law is to enforce the edu-

cation of children for the public good, excepting where individual necessity would make the enforcement of the law too burdensome."

The question of issuing or withholding a certificate when application is made for same should be decided on the merits of each case and from information gathered as to the status of the home life and the ability of the family to provide, without serious sacrifice, for the education of the child. The import of this interpretation renders it within the power of the principal to withhold a certificate should the financial conditions of the family justify the continuance of the child in the work of the school.[1]

Whatever may have been intended by the word "necessarily" in the law, it is clear that it is useless unless provision is made for a systematic investigation of the home circumstances of each child. At present, of course, no machinery exists for making such inquiries.

One further comment may be made with regard to the words "necessarily . . . . employed." Such a provision merely excuses from the benefits of the compulsory education law the children of especially "necessitous" parents. The early compulsory laws which fixed the school-leaving age at twelve or fourteen usually made similar exemptions of children who "on account of poverty" were obliged to work, and it was found that such provisions were objectionable in many ways. For example, the children excused because of poverty were the very ones most in need of education. Moreover it is impossible for the law to define with a satisfactory degree of precision the standard of poverty or necessity that is to entitle a child to exemption from school attendance. As the old exemptions for poverty were dropped for children below the age of fourteen, so must the excuse of poverty be dropped for children between fourteen and sixteen. If school attendance is to be made compulsory for any children, it must be made compulsory for all children.

[1] *Superintendent's Bulletin*, February 21, 1916, p. 50.

Another difficulty in the way of enforcing the provision of the law requiring children between fourteen and sixteen to be either at school or at work is that the law provides no way of disciplining the unemployed child who refuses to return to school. The parental school law was passed in 1899, when the compulsory education law provided only for children under fourteen years of age, and unfortunately this law was not amended in 1907 when the "fourteen-to-sixteen" amendment was added to the compulsory law. It will be remembered that the parental school law provides for the establishment of parental or truant schools for the purpose of affording a place of confinement, discipline, instruction, and maintenance for children of compulsory school age.[1] In defining the methods of commitment, however, it is provided that the children are not to be cared for in this institution after they reach the age of fourteen. This means that the Department of Compulsory Education has no machinery for dealing with the wilful truant over fourteen, other than by bringing him into court to receive a reprimand from the judge. The parents, of course, might be brought into the Municipal Court, but in the case of these older boys parental control is weak, even when the parents are intelligent enough to co-operate by exercising their authority. If the boy is really bad or if the home is really degraded, recourse may be had to the juvenile court law and the boy may be treated as a delinquent or as a dependent child under the provisions of that law. But such procedure obviously is applicable only to extreme cases and is not suited to the thousands of boys and girls who need the control and the oversight of the school during these critical years.

The Department of Compulsory Education in Chicago has at different times recommended that special provision be made at the Parental School for boys between fourteen and six-

[1] See *Revised Statutes*, chap. 122, sec. 140.

teen.[1] But attention must be called to the fact that even if this provision were made, the real problem of proper care for such children would go unsolved until some method could be devised of systematically tracing all unemployed children between these ages.

With regard to the fourteen- to sixteen-year-old children, then, it is as though the compulsory law ignored them entirely, for, although the law says that they must be in school unless "necessarily and lawfully employed," no inquiry into the home circumstances of the child is required by law and the words "necessarily . . . . employed" are therefore nullified in practice, no provision is made for ascertaining whether or not children with work certificates are "lawfully employed," and there is no place to which children who refuse to return to school can be committed. On the whole, therefore, it may be said that the attempt made to extend the benefits of the compulsory law to all children under sixteen years of age has proved abortive, and the children are almost as unprotected as if the law ignored them.

[1] The present superintendent of compulsory education has, for example, more than once called attention to the need of such provision for children over fourteen, and in a recent report of the Chicago Board of Education he strongly emphasizes "the necessity for better provision for the correction and care of children between fourteen and sixteen years of age who are beyond parental control and who prefer idleness to school attendance or employment. . . . . The only recourse under present conditions against a fourteen-year-old truant who has committed no other offense than truancy, is to charge him with incorrigible or delinquent conduct and to ask his commitment to the John Worthy School or to St. Charles. The former is a prison school where the worst type of delinquent boys is sent. St. Charles has not sufficient capacity to provide for urgent delinquent cases. It is therefore a question of consistency for one state law to provide for compulsory attendance up to the age of sixteen while another state law—the parental school law—provides for truants only between seven and fourteen years, and bars the truant between fourteen and sixteen."—*Fifty-seventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago*, p. 138.

The question remains to be asked: What are the facts regarding the present employment of children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen in Chicago, and how far do they support the demand for raising the compulsory attendance age from fourteen to sixteen years for all children? Is the work that is found by children of these ages sufficiently educative and valuable to justify the loss of these two years of school, or are their wages so essential to the support of their family that their employment must be permitted as a means of keeping these families self-sustaining and independent?

Perhaps the most convincing argument for the extension of the child labor law is to be found in the fact that at present there is so little demand for the labor of children under sixteen years of age that it is impossible for more than a small percentage of the children who leave school at the age of fourteen or fifteen to find employment. There is always a demand for unregulated child labor, but when the law prescribes, as the Illinois law does, that children between fourteen and sixteen may be employed only under certain conditions, that they may not work more than eight hours a day or more than forty-eight hours a week, that they may not work at night, that they may not operate certain kinds of machines, then their labor ceases to be profitable to an employer. Unless he can exploit the children who work for him, the employer does not find that it "pays" to employ them at all. Firms that used to employ large numbers of children between fourteen and sixteen years of age in the old *laissez-faire* days now find protected child labor more trouble than it is worth. Many employers, too, do not care to run the risk of prosecution because of unintentional violations of the child labor laws. "We don't want to be bothered with the factory inspectors and the trouble about work certificates," is a common explanation of the refusal to employ children under sixteen.

When the law attempts, therefore, to protect the working child, the effect is much the same as if employment were in large measure prohibited, for the children soon learn that there are no "jobs" to be found, and they spend their newly acquired leisure fruitlessly looking for work or idling on the streets. What has happened, therefore, is that by regulating the employment of children between fourteen and sixteen, the legislature has virtually prohibited their employment, but has not required them to go to school. That is, the legislature repeated the mistake it made in 1893 when it took children out of the factories but left them on the street instead of requiring them to go to school.[1] What is needed is that the legislature should now face the fact that the employment of children under sixteen has been virtually prohibited. This prohibition should then be made absolute and the compulsory attendance law should be extended so as to require all children without any "exemptions" to spend these critical and valuable years in school.

Testimony in support of the fact that there are very few occupations open to children under sixteen is not lacking. In the first place census statistics show a smaller number of children employed in 1910 than in 1900 in spite of the increase in child population. Take, for example, the census statistics relating

TABLE XXXII

AVERAGE NUMBER OF WAGE-EARNERS IN ILLINOIS*

	Total	Number under 16	Percentage under 16
1909.....	465,764	6,917	1.5
1899.....	332,871	9,943	3.0

*Estimated on basis of actual number reported for a single representative day. *Thirteenth Census of United States*, 1910, Abstract, with supplement for Illinois, p. 709.

[1] See chap. v, "Parallel Development of the Illinois Child Labor and Compulsory Education Laws."

to the employment of children in manufacturing industries. The statistics presented relate to manufacturing industries only, but similar data are available for other occupations. Thus, the data given in Table XXXIII which are taken from the last census of occupations show for Chicago a reduction in the number of children in "all occupations." These statistics merely confirm the testimony given by the census of manufactures. The total number of children employed in Chicago fell from 27,527 to 20,490 and constituted 2.1 per cent of all persons employed in the latter year instead of 3.9 per cent in the earlier year. It should be noted, moreover, that all children claiming to be wage-earners were included in the occupational census, whether they were at work or not at the time the census was taken.

TABLE XXXIII

TOTAL NUMBER, AND NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN UNDER SIXTEEN EMPLOYED IN GAINFUL OCCUPATIONS IN CHICAGO, 1900 AND 1910*

	Total	Number under 16	Percentage under 16
1910.....	996,589	20,490	**2.1**
1900.....	705,382	27,527	**3.9**

**Thirteenth Census,* "Occupations," pp. 544–46; *Twelfth Census,* "Occupations," pp. 516–21.

The result of there being so few openings for children and of allowing so many of them to leave school to search for employment each year is that a very considerable proportion of the children who get their employment certificates are idle during the greater part of the time. Some statistics showing the number of months that these children are out of work are available in the records of the Employment Supervision Bureau.[1]

[1] See *ante,* p. 230, note, and Appendix VII for an account of the work of this bureau.

An examination of the records selected at random of 279 boys between fourteen and sixteen, who had left school to go to work two years earlier and whose work records were complete, showed that 10 per cent had not been able to find any work, that 44 per cent had worked less than half of the time since leaving school, and that 56 per cent had worked less than two-thirds of the time, and that only 10 per cent had been employed as much as nine-tenths of the time since they had left school to go to work.[1]

Other statistics are available for another group of 135 children, all of whom had been out of school for periods of from

[1] The last report of the Chicago school census taken by the Department of Compulsory Education contains the following statistics relating to children between fourteen and sixteen (*School Census*, 1914, p. 15):

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND EMPLOYMENT OF CHICAGO CHILDREN BETWEEN FOURTEEN AND SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE

Attending public or private schools	73,070
"Out of school and out of work for thirty consecutive days"	942
"Working"	14,854
Total population between ages of fourteen and sixteen	88,866

This table is somewhat difficult to understand because it is not clear whether or not the 942 children who are said to be neither at school nor at work for thirty days are children with employment certificates or children supposed to be attending school but absent from school. Nor is it clear whether the children classified as "working" were actually employed or merely reported as employed because they had been given working papers and were out seeking work. In any event, although to those who have experience in the work of finding "jobs" for children it seems almost incredible that the number of children between fourteen and sixteen who were neither at school nor at work was only 942, yet attention may be called to the fact that if this be the correct number, it must be accepted with the understanding that it gives only a flashlight view of the situation. One thousand children may be out of work one month and another thousand children out of work another month, and so on. So that during the year several thousands of children would have had the demoralizing experiences of idleness. Since the writing of this chapter a very exceptional situation with regard to the employment of children has developed. See note at end of chapter.

one to two years.[1] The records of these children showed that 18 per cent of them had never had any work at all, and although exempt from school attendance on the ground that they were "lawfully employed," they had merely been looking for work or idling for a period of not less than twelve months; 6 per cent had worked for periods varying from a few days to one month; 10 per cent more had had work for periods varying from four to eight weeks, and 7 per cent more for periods varying from eight to twelve weeks. In addition, therefore, to the 18 per cent who had been idle for at least twelve months, another 23 per cent had been idle for at least nine months, and 24 per cent more worked three months and less than six months. Summarizing these percentages, 65 per cent of the children had been idle at least six months, one-half or more than one-half of the time that they had been out of school.

Not only are many of these children idle the greater part of the time, but when they do find work, it is largely in uneducative, undisciplinary, "blind-alley" occupations that are likely to lead to nothing but a "dead end" and unemployment in the future. The way to the skilled trades which is through union regulations is almost wholly closed to children under sixteen. The skilled workman, trade-unionist or not, is always opposed to child labor. With reference to this point, the director of the Employment Supervision Bureau in testifying at the hearing of the subcommittee of the Illinois House of Representatives in 1915 on the need of a new child labor bill said:

> The trades do not employ children under sixteen. The employers in the more skilled lines of work refuse to take children because they have not had enough training, they are too immature, they are too childish and irresponsible, and employers find that it is an economic waste to bother with them. So we find these children going into the

[1] The records of these children were transcribed by Miss Chamberlain, of the University of Chicago. The cases were selected at random from the records that gave the complete employment history of children who had had their working papers for at least one year.

more unskilled work. The majority go into the box factories where they "turn in," "cover," "bind," and "tie"; into the candy factories where they wrap and pack candy; and into the low-grade tailor shops where the majority pull bastings and brush clothes, but few do any form of needle-work. They go into the department stores where they are employed as cash girls, as inspectors, as stock boys, and messengers; a few enter the boot and shoe factories where they tie and cut threads, polish and clean shoes, tag and lace and assemble parts of shoes; they go into the engraving shops where they feed a little hand machine; and into the moulding and picture-frame factories where they wrap and carry moulding. A few are employed in the knitting mills where they cut threads, sort, count, tie, and label; a few work in the laundries where they shake and mark clothes; a few are employed in the book binderies where they fold, or feed a wire stitching machine. Many are employed in the novelty shops where they do such mechanical processes as counting and sorting, tying tags, etc.; a few are employed in the bakeries where they pack and label; a few are employed in the press-clipping bureaus where they clip items from the newspapers; a great many go into the soap factories where they wrap soap, and into various factories where they do such unskilled work as labeling; and a few are employed in offices.

The child *is not learning a trade or doing anything by which he may earn his living later in life.* One might readily think that the cash girls in a department store in a few years become sales girls, but the large majority when they are too old for children's tasks, seek employment in low-grade factories because they are unfitted for any special line of work.[1]

It seems to be clear then that the years between fourteen and sixteen are most wastefully spent by the children who are given employment certificates and leave school to go to work, or, more frequently, to drift idly about the streets during this impressionable period of adolescence.

It may be claimed, of course, that in many cases the parents need the children's earnings, but it has already been shown that

[1] *Report of the Illinois Child Labor Committee: Why Illinois Wants a New Child Labor Law: A Digest of What the Sub-Committee Found* (1915).

small earnings or no earnings at all are the result. Under the present system the poorest people are sorely tempted to make use of the freedom that the law gives them to send their children out to look for work, without realizing that the boy or girl for whom such heavy sacrifices have already been made will be spending the greater part of two years in demoralizing idleness for the sake of an occasional small wage or none at all. The ignorant and discouraged parent, weary of the desperate struggle with poverty, may be excused for wanting some help from the children he is trying to support, but the law should protect both child and parents by making it impossible for the child's future to be jeopardized in a fruitless attempt to meet the family necessities. "She might as well wear her shoes out going to work as going to school," said an overburdened mother who was insisting on putting an undeveloped child to work. "I've fed her for fourteen years and now that the law says she can help feed me and the other children, she's got to do it," was the bitter reply of an unemployed father to a request that his little girl might be allowed to stay in school until she was better fitted for work. "Do please find me a job, missus," was the plaintive request of a small boy of fourteen at the door of a friendly settlement. "My father says I can't come home if I don't get a job. He won't feed a bum, he says, 'No work, no eats.'" Such ignorant or desperate parents need to be protected against themselves. They gain nothing in the end by being allowed to take their children out of school and see them grow into worthless men and women. There can be no doubt that in too many homes, the pressure of poverty is so great that the children, if at work, would be, in the terms of the statute "necessarily . . . . employed." But the "necessity" of the work must be estimated not by the poverty in the home, but in terms of its educative value from the point of view of their later industrial life and their fitness for citizenship. As a matter of fact, the experiences into which these children are

led in securing their jobs, often by overstating their age, generally in a purely casual and accidental manner, in leaving job after job or being laid off, in loafing between jobs, in overstrain, in being victimized by violations of the child labor law, and at best, in work which is monotonous, irregular, or in itself demoralizing, are such as tend in no way toward their proper physical and mental development.

On the other hand, nothing is finer than the eagerness of these poor children to share in the family responsibility. So long as the law gives them any choice in the matter, the children who are most ambitious and industrious are the ones who will feel it their duty to leave school if it means lightening in the smallest degree the family burden. Social workers who come in close contact with the family problems of the poor find innumerable examples of this desire on the part of very young children to assume some part of the family burdens. Thus a little boy from an immigrant Italian family who asked for help in finding work reported that his father was dead and his mother could not leave the three small children to go to work, and he looked upon the finding of a "job" as an imperative duty. When he was told that he was too small and undersized to go to work, he burst into tears, asking, "Who's going to support the family if I can't work?" A similar situation was that of a small Hungarian boy who was found to be working under age. When he was told that his working papers would have to be canceled he, too, wept bitterly and asked over and over again, "Who'll pay the rent? Who'll take care of the children?" Fortunately in both of these cases the families were found to be eligible for "widows' pensions."

In another family, Elizabeth, who was the oldest of eight children, was very small and had reached only the sixth grade when she attained her fourteenth birthday. Her father was an invalid, and she at once looked upon herself as the head of the family and went immediately in search of a "job." With the

assistance of a charitable agency, work was found in an office where she was to help with the filing, but when it was discovered that she was too small to reach the files, the employer was about to discharge her. Touched by her eagerness in asking if he had not some other work that she could do till she grew taller, because she had a sick father and seven little brothers and sisters to take care of, the employer found a place for her in another department.

There is no desire to minimize the value to the child of the sense of responsibility and family devotion, but this should not become a heavy burden while the child is too immature to carry it. As the child is prevented from allowing his affection for his family to drive him into wage-earning at the age of twelve, so he can be protected at the age of fourteen, when he is likewise too young to assume the responsibilities of family maintenance.

Leaving the question of "necessitous" children, attention must be called to the cases in which children leave school when their earnings are not needed in the home. Many parents in comfortable circumstances who, if required by law to do so, could keep the child in school until sixteen without any hardship or deprivation in the home, are so careless and indifferent or so shortsighted and unintelligent that they take the child out of school the moment the law allows them to do so. Such parents fail to realize the value to the child of the two additional years in school on the one hand, and, on the other hand, they do not understand the unprofitable nature of the occupations open to their children.

The director of the Employment Supervision Bureau on the basis of a careful study of the records of children who had applied for work and whose home circumstances had been investigated, estimated that, in more than two-thirds of the cases, the families did not need the help of the children who were nevertheless obliged to leave school on the very earliest day the law

allowed. In her testimony before the legislative committee she said that her records showed that the children

are more often taken out of school by parents who wish to accumulate property, or who sacrifice the education of the child in order that they may pay the monthly instalment on a piano or some other luxury. In one neighborhood in Chicago where the people are thrifty and nearly all own their homes, the children are taken out of school on the very day they reach fourteen. The little girls go into the tailor shops where they earn as little as $1 a week and the majority do not earn more than $3 or $3.50 a week. There are many children who leave school only because they are fourteen and the law gives them that liberty. There are many who leave because the parents are ignorant of industrial conditions; they think a child may learn a trade at fourteen, as formerly, but after a few months or a year these children regret that they have left school because they find that industry does not offer the thing they are seeking. But few children will return to school after they have once secured their working permits. There are children who leave school because they do not like school, but the schools are now providing industrial work which appeals to those who are not academically inclined and which will tend to keep more children in school.[1]

The following cases illustrate the waste that is occasioned by the "exemption" from school attendance granted to children who wish to leave school to seek employment between the ages of fourteen and sixteen.

Anna X———, a clever little Bohemian girl, left school on her fourteenth birthday although it fell on May 17, and she ought at least to have finished the school year. Her father and her older sister had regular work at good wages, and there were no younger children. She had done unusually well in school, but the father would not listen to any argument that she should be allowed to remain. There was no pretext that her earnings were needed, but the father said the mother was away on a visit

[1] *Report of the Illinois Child Labor Committee: Why Illinois Wants a New Child Labor Law: A Digest of What the Sub-Committee Found*, p. 5.

and the little girl could do the housework. She was an exceptionally nice child and had finished the fifth grade, although she had been in this country only four years, and she was eager to stay on in school.

Louise Y———, another little Bohemian girl, left the eighth grade on April 30, the day of her fourteenth birthday, and got a position in a local store at $2.50 a week. The family were in comfortable circumstances, and her earnings were not needed in the home. The father and two older children had good jobs, and there was only one younger child. Her work at the store lasted only a few weeks, and she then applied for assistance in finding other work. An effort was made to persuade her to return to school, but she could not be persuaded and said if she could not find a job she would just stay at home, although she had admitted that her help was not needed in the house.

In some cases, the parents are dead, and the older brothers and sisters demand the child's employment. Such was the case with Anna G———, a German-Polish girl whose parents were dead, whose brothers earn $33 a week and had only Anna and one younger child to support. They thought, however, that since Anna might lawfully work, she should do so, and by so much relieve them of her support.

Sometimes the parents insist on the child's leaving school because of discouragement at the child's failure to progress in his school work. In the case of an Italian boy, Tony Z———, his father kept him in school until he was fifteen and then got tired of sending him to school because he "was not learning anything." On investigation it was found that although Tony was nominally in the fifth grade, he could neither read nor write. The principal said that he had promoted him from time to time "to encourage him," but it appeared that he had never sent the boy to the Child-Study Department. When taken there by the social worker who had become interested in his

behalf, he was found to be very subnormal and a fit subject for such a subnormal room as he could have attended in a neighboring school if he had been sent earlier to the department for examination. The father had, however, grown too discouraged to listen to any advice and insisted on taking the child out of school since the law permitted him to do so.

It is sometimes possible to return to school a child who has not finished the eighth grade if his earnings do not appear to be needed in the home, but little effort seems to be made at present to return the child who has graduated. In many cases these children are eager to go on to the high school and realize, as their parents do not, that there is little chance of their finding work before they are sixteen and every chance of their spending the intervening two years wastefully and of not being able to get a good position when they reach the age of sixteen. These children do the same work as those who have not graduated, and have the same difficulty in finding work.

Such is the case of Ethel A———, an American child with American parents, the father a steamfitter earning $35 a week. In this case the child's parents refused to allow her to go to high school although she was very eager to do so. She applied to the Employment Supervision Bureau for assistance in finding work six months after she left school. An agent of the bureau called at the home and endeavored to persuade the mother to allow the girl to take a business course in a high school, and called the mother's attention to the fact that the girl had had only one week's work during the six months since she had been out of school. The mother wavered, but only temporarily, and refused finally and peremptorily to allow the child to go to school.

Another neat, nice-looking little girl who had graduated from the eighth grade was Gertrude B———. She had not yet had a position and the Employment Supervision Bureau endeavored to find some office work for her. When she was

first interviewed she was told that someone would see her mother and try to get her returned to school, but she said, "My teacher was over to see my mother and just talked her head off, but it didn't change my mother's mind one bit." The girl looked so young that up to the time of the report it had not been possible to find work for her; but although her father was willing, her mother firmly refused to allow her to return to school.

Sometimes the fact that the child was "graduated" is held by the parents to entitle him to a work certificate, even if he is not fourteen, and if the certificate cannot be obtained, to justify his going to work without one. Such was the case of Max C———, who was born March 25, 1901, and graduated from the eighth grade in June, 1914. The family was in very comfortable circumstances. The father was a machine operator; a brother, twenty-one, was a moving-picture operator, and an older sister worked in an office. While the boy was still in school and before he was fourteen, he worked after school hours and on Saturdays for a tailor, running errands, and earned $3 a week. He graduated from the eighth grade three months after his thirteenth birthday, but did not go to high school because he did not like school, and he wanted to work. He was not old enough to get a certificate, and therefore worked without one in a coat shop where he earned $5 a week. Three months later he got a job with a vaudeville company, singing, and he earned $23.50 a week. He had traveled with this company for six months before he was fourteen years of age. After nine months he lost his voice and had to give up his position, and is now drifting about.

In such cases as this, the law should protect the boy against himself and his own foolish boyish impulses. In a very considerable number of cases, the parents are anxious to keep the boy in school, but the boy prefers "knocking about" trying different jobs and loafing between jobs. Such boys think of leaving school only because the law permits them to do so.

For example, there is the case of Fred D———, a bright Italian boy, whose father earned good wages and was anxious to have his boy stay in school. He was in the first year in high school when his fourteenth birthday came, although he was six years old when he came to this country. But he was "tired of school," and although he had no "job" in sight he left school. His father said the law helped him to keep his child in school until he was fourteen, but after that he was left helpless, although he wanted his boy to be better trained and educated than he had been.

A similar case is that of Willard M———. He came from a good home, did well in school and could perfectly well have gone through high school, but he had just "got tired of school" and decided to go to work. His parents got him a job in a railroad office and he is not doing badly. But he will surely feel later the lack of the further education he might have had.

Thus at present the children who could perfectly well afford to stay in school are now leaving on the slightest pretext because they know that the law permits it. Such children and their parents need the protection of a more adequate compulsory school law, and the state needs the means of thus raising the intelligence of its future citizens.

Sometimes it is a girl who refuses to submit longer to the discipline of the schoolroom. Three girls in the eighth grade who sat together and were unruly were told by the principal that unless they studied more they would be unable to graduate at the end of the year. They forthwith demanded their working papers and left. Fortunately, the vocational supervisor to whom the principal sent them was able to show them how foolish they were and they returned to school.

The case of Della Y——— is a very good example of a child who did not need to leave school. Her family was in very comfortable circumstances, her relationship to the school was pleasant, and she merely left because the law allowed her

to do so. Della left school two weeks after her fourteenth birthday, although she was in the eighth grade, and the principal reported that she was doing good work and that it was a misfortune that she should be allowed to leave school before her graduation. The family was not in need of her earnings, for the father and an older brother and sister were working. The mother said that she had tried to keep Della in school, but the girl had been offered a position at a near-by dry-goods store, had insisted on leaving school, and had gone to work without a certificate. Within a few days the manager of the store had discovered that the girl had no certificate, had reprimanded the department manager for taking her on, and discharged her. A visitor from the Employment Supervision Bureau where she had applied for help visited the home, and the mother said that she could not possibly get the girl to go back to school, and that if she did not get a certificate and go to work, she would simply be on the street. Another attempt was made to persuade the child to return to school, but it was useless, and the certificate was finally issued.

Much is said about the fact that children get tired of school, as though the school had little to offer them and their continued enforced attendance were perhaps of slight importance. The school is of course sometimes at fault here, since an occasional teacher is guilty of thinking that a troublesome child is learning very litttle and might just as well leave school as remain to be a nuisance to the teachers. Moreover, it is at least open to question whether or not the schools are doing all they might do to counteract the prevalent assumption that the fourteenth birthday means the end of school, and whether the schools are as yet doing their part in educating children not to think of fourteen as an age of possible withdrawal from school.

This is not the place to discuss, if we were able to do so, the phenomenon of adolescence, but the importance that has been assigned to the fact that the boy or the girl wearies of the sorely

needed discipline of the school seems at times to be given exaggerated emphasis. The schools obviously are not beyond the possibility of improvement, but with all their weaknesses there is certainly no other agency that can so well serve these children at the time when their minds are most eager and awake. It is surely a fatal error that they should be allowed to slip away from the beneficial and illuminating influences of the one educational agency that can reach them, only to be thrown without supervision into uneducative work or into the life of the streets.

The present law requires that children between fourteen and sixteen must be either at school or at work. There are, it has been pointed out, many reasons why the law should be changed and no children allowed to leave school to go to work before the age of sixteen. But whatever the age at which a child is granted an employment certificate, no such certificate should be issued until employment has actually been found for him. That is, no employment certificate should be issued unless the child has a definite promise of a job, such as a signed statement by an employer that he is ready to employ the child on a certain day. The recent report of the Children's Bureau on the Connecticut employment certificate system is emphatic upon this point and says that "if an employment certificate is to be in reality what its name implies and not merely a permit to leave school for any purpose whatever," then it must not be granted unless the authorities have knowledge that the certificate is required for purposes of employment. "On the other hand, if the child has no position promised this requirement prevents him," the report of the Bureau points out, "from getting out of school merely to roam the streets."[1]

Again, whatever the age at which an employment certificate is issued, it is essential that for the first two years after the child leaves school to make the difficult transition into his working

[1] *Employment Certificate System in Connecticut*, p. 39.

life the school should continue to have supervision over him. That is, although attendance at school may cease to be compulsory provided the child is legally at work, school attendance should be required if he is out of work. The state should take no chances with the demoralizing results of idleness. The boy or the girl who does not work should not be allowed to "loaf" but should be required immediately to return to school. In order to know whether or not children are at work, employers of juvenile labor should be required to send notice when a juvenile worker leaves his employment. There are, of course, difficulties in the way of enforcing such laws. Fortunately, some states have already made experiments with the sending of such notices and there is available some testimony with regard to the best methods of carrying out such a plan. The Children's Bureau, for example, offers much valuable comment on the use of termination notices in Connecticut. To quote again from this valuable study of the Connecticut system:

"The provision that unemployed children must go back to school is the most difficult part of the law to enforce. In the first place it is entirely dependent upon the sending in by employers of termination notices. If the employer fails to send this notice the child may be either unemployed and not in school or illegally employed for months unless he is accidentally discovered. . . . .

"A second reason for the difficulty in getting unemployed children back to school is that no provision is made in the schools for profitably utilizing their time. In some places these children are put in ungraded classes, but as they have already passed the educational test for a certificate this provision does not by any means fill their needs. Where in the absence of ungraded classes they are put back into the regular grades their condition is even more unsatisfactory, for they find themselves in a lower grade than they would have been in if they had remained in school, and at the same time in the company of children who are in many ways less mature than themselves. . . . .

"Recognizing the lack of opportunity in the schools and the lack of welcome there, the agents of the State board of education, instead of attempting to send unemployed children back to school, often attempt to find new positions for them."

Before the return of unemployed children to school can be systematically enforced, special rooms or schools must be provided for them. Otherwise they will, of course, upset the school routine. Moreover, as the investigators of the Children's Bureau point out, "The ordinary schools . . . . are not adapted either to hold the interest of children who have been at work but are temporarily unemployed or to give them the kind of instruction which they need."

A satisfactory program for the care of children who have just completed the period of full time compulsory attendance should require a further period of compulsory attendance during a few hours each week at continuation schools provided to meet the special needs of working children. This is obviously not the place for a detailed discussion of the work of continuation schools. Attention must, however, be called to the fact that boys and girls leaving the public schools to go to work should not suddenly be released from all educational influences and from all supervision and control by the educational authorities. The continuation school, largely developed in Germany and to a lesser extent in England and Scotland, has been devised to meet this need. In the words of Professor Sadler: "The purpose of the continuation school is to provide at convenient hours further instruction for those who have already left the day school and have entered upon the practical work of life whether as apprentices or as independent wage-earners or in the duties of the home."[1]

[1] "It endeavors to meet the needs of both sexes. It presupposes a sufficient basis of elementary education but, where that is defective, attempts to supply it. The lower age-limit of its pupils varies according to the age at which boys and girls are released from compulsory attendance at the elementary day school. In the more advanced stages of its work the

In 1909 the English Board of Education submitted to Parliament the report of the "Consultative Committee on Attendance, Compulsory or Otherwise, at Continuation Schools," and the findings of this committee should be carefully studied in our own country. The committee emphasize the fact that in England as in our American cities and states, the years from fourteen to sixteen are years of "educational leakage," that children of fourteen are not "fitted when they leave the day schools to be transferred to their various callings or occupations without further school attendance"; and the report notes that at present the permanent interests of the community are not protected "from the injury which is done to the character and prospects of individuals as well as to the civic welfare and economic resources of the nation by educational neglect during adolescence and by deteriorative conditions of early employment. The committee find that at the most critical period in their lives a very large majority of the boys and girls in England and Wales are left without any sufficient guidance and care. This neglect results in great waste of early promise, in injury to character, in the lessening of industrial efficiency and in the lowering of ideals of personal and civic duty.

"That there is need in this country for the systematic encouragement of suitable and practical kinds of continued education beyond the now too early close of the Elementary

continuation school includes many different forms of adult education. The higher age-limit of its province is therefore undefined. The task of the continuation school thus falls into two main, though not clearly demarcated, divisions—the elementary and the advanced. Its work is in part general education, but increasingly (though by no means exclusively) technical. Its function is two-fold: to prepare its pupils for the efficient discharge of the duties of citizenship and to increase their power and skill in bread-winning occupations. For those who leave the elementary school at thirteen or fourteen years of age and cannot proceed to a secondary school, the continuation school attempts to give during adolescence and early manhood or womanhood such opportunities of further training as the exigencies of employment may permit." M. E. Sadler, *Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere*, p. 689.

Day School course is the conclusion which has been reached by all those who have recently investigated the subject."[1]

It is essential, if the continuation school is adequately to meet the needs of these young working children, that attendance should be compulsory and that the working hours of children should be so adjusted that they may be able to attend day sessions. The old method of continuing the education of children leaving school at fourteen was to provide good evening schools for them, which duplicated the work of the day schools and provided for the ambitious boy or girl a chance to graduate from the eighth grade or the high school. It has been proved that this method is wholly inadequate. Young children just leaving school to go to work cannot, without undue fatigue, attend evening classes after a day's work in a factory or an office. The German system of compulsory day continuation classes, which permits no school for working children to be open after seven o'clock in the evening, is the only rational method of meeting this problem.

With regard to the question of making attendance at continuation schools compulsory and not voluntary, attention is called to the following emphatic statement from a recent study of the continuation school:

"If there is one point upon which authorities who have had experience of voluntary and compulsory continuation schools in England, Germany, and America, agree today, it is upon the necessity of a compulsory system. All over Germany one hears the same tale, ... 'We only adopted the compulsory principle when the voluntary had broken down.' . . . . The desire and power to attend continuation classes does not depend solely on the willingness of the employer to allow such attendance

[1] See Great Britain Board of Education, *Report of the Consultative Committee on Attendance, Compulsory or Otherwise, at Continuation Schools.* Cd. 4757 (1909) I: p. 16. And see Sadler, *op. cit.*, chap. xxv, "Should Attendance in Continuation Schools Be Made Compulsory in England?"

but on a dozen variable conditions, due to family, health, employment, surroundings, prospects, and so forth. In any case it must always leave out of account just that section of the children who most need the regular influence of humane and sympathetic persons."[1]

The compulsory continuation school provides a definite practicable method of keeping in touch with children after the period of full-time compulsory attendance has come to an end.

Not only are continuation schools needed as a connecting link between the schools and the child who is thrown suddenly into the working world, but there is need also of a bureau of employment supervision which shall save the child the wasteful "hunt for a job" and see that he is placed in work to which he is suited and in which he may advance. Such a bureau will also prove to be indispensable in connection with any attempt to return boys or girls to school when they are out of work. For if the official school employment bureau can find no suitable "jobs" for them, it is obvious that they must be kept in school until such jobs are available. Moreover the existence of such an employment bureau will be of great service if an attempt is to be made to prevent any child from leaving school until a promise of work has been secured for him.[2] This work of supervising and guiding the working child, however, is at present in a large measure palliative. For it is apparent that no method of "guidance" can succeed with uneducated children

[1] R. H. Best and C. K. Ogden, *The Problem of the Continuation School* (London, 1914), p. 56.

[2] This system has been successfully tried in many English cities through the co-operation between the public Juvenile Labour Exchanges and the local educational authorities. See our pamphlet, already referred to, entitled "*Finding Employment for Children Who Leave the Grade Schools to Go to Work*, with its bibliography of English books and pamphlets dealing with the subject. See especially, F. Keeling, *The Labour Exchange in Relation to Boy and Girl Labour*, and A. Greenwood, *Juvenile Labour Exchange and After-Care.*

too young for any kind of successful work. "Employment supervision" or "vocational guidance" for boys who are allowed to leave school at the fifth grade or earlier and to whom nothing is open but errand-boy jobs or low-grade work in a box factory must necessarily be only a half-way remedial measure. It may succeed in finding for the boy the best employment that exists under the circumstances, but that best will be very poor. That is, no amount of supervision or guidance in finding work will take the place of adequate elementary education. With the raising of the child labor and compulsory education age, the field of work for such a bureau will, of course, be very widely extended.[1]

[1] Conditions with regard to the employment of children have suddenly changed since this chapter was written. The abnormal industrial conditions that have arisen from our "war prosperity" and the cessation of immigration have brought a great and pressing demand for labor. The scarcity of immigrant labor has led to a temporarily increased demand for boys and girls under sixteen years of age. Department stores and factories that a few months ago were refusing to employ anyone under sixteen years of age are now advertising for boys and girls between fourteen and sixteen. One of the packing companies in the stockyards is employing children under sixteen to do the unskilled work that immigrants formerly did.

At present there are not enough boys and girls to supply the demand. Employers complain that they have had "ads" in the daily papers for two or three weeks at a time, yet no one has responded. Firms which paid an initial wage of $4.50 a week are now offering $6.00 a week to errand boys of fourteen. Employers say that their agents have been walking the streets in search of boys and girls. It has not been unusual for an employer to offer fifty cents or a dollar a week more to an errand boy delivering a package to him, in order to get the boy to accept a position with him.

The situation is demoralizing to the child. The great demand for boys and girls causes them to change positions frequently, and the continual shifting makes for unsteady habits. The principals of the elementary schools say that children who are leaving school have positions promised, and it is the prospect of an immediate job that is causing many to leave school. It is not surprising to find that there are also more complaints that children are working in violation of the child labor law. There is also serious danger of overwork. One employer who has not been able to get enough girls to do his work has been giving work to little girls of fourteen employed in his shop, to take home to do at night.

CHAPTER XXI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to describe the administrative machinery which has gradually been developed to protect the right to the minimum of education which the state has undertaken to secure to all its children. It has been necessary to study the history of the long years during which the friends of education in Illinois fought for the establishment of a free common-school system. During the succeeding period, the local authorities were busy providing the required school facilities but no attempt was made to enforce the use of those facilities, and the necessity of exercising compulsion on the community was not recognized by the state. Attention has been called to the gradual appreciation of the fact that, educational opportunities being provided, the child and the parent may have to be compelled to take advantage of them. Finally, a careful examination of the situation in Chicago indicates that, although the principle of compulsion has been accepted, there are defects in the legislation and in the administration of the law which deprive many children of the education ostensibly secured to them by law.

To meet these various defects in the compulsory education situation, radical changes are needed both in the child labor and compulsory education laws. Without waiting, however, for these legislative changes, an improvement in the local situation could be brought about by certain changes, easily made, in educational policy. We do not undertake to recommend in detail the action to be taken, but we venture to suggest in somewhat general terms, certain changes the desirability of which

seems to be established. The necessary statutory changes may briefly be summarized as follows:

1. That a state board or department of education be created which shall have, among other functions, the duty of supervising and standardizing the enforcement of the school attendance laws in all portions of the state. The compulsory education laws need not, like the factory acts, be exclusively enforced by state inspectors; but state educational inspectors should be authorized to see that the local authorities through their indifference do not nullify the law. Moreover, the state school funds should be distributed upon the basis of attendance rather than of enrolment or of minor population. [1]

2. That the exemption from school attendance of children between fourteen and sixteen "lawfully and necessarily employed" be done away with.

3. That the age of children who may be committed to the Parental School be raised to sixteen years.

4. That the age of lawful employment of children be raised from fourteen to sixteen years.

5. That the issuing of working papers be taken from the local school superintendents and given over to the state education authority.

6. That the new standard for the issuing of working papers should prescribe not only a new minimum age, sixteen instead of fourteen, but also (*a*) a minimum of physical development which shall insure that no child be put to work when he is physically unfit for work, and (*b*) a new minimum of educational development. The words "in English" should be added in the new law to the reading and writing tests, in order that every child, foreign or native born, may include as one of his working tools a knowledge of the language of the country. But the educational minimum should be higher than this. To the present

[1] Note that the early laws provided for the apportionment of funds according to attendance. See Appendix 1, doc. 5, p. 363.

educational test should be added requirements as to a knowledge of arithmetic, which shall ensure that no child shall leave school to go to work before he has completed the sixth grade. This is, of course, an inadequate and unsatisfactory minimum. As a matter of fact, it is little enough for a democracy to require that all its children shall complete the work of the elementary schools. This can easily be done if the compulsory attendance age is extended to sixteen. It could, however, be done now if the compulsory attendance period began at five or even six, instead of seven years. Certainly the vast majority of children between five and seven are better off in a well-conducted school than they are in the streets or in an ill-kept home.

7. In addition to raising the age at which compulsory attendance shall cease, we venture to recommend that a system of compulsory day continuation schools be developed and that attendance upon these be required of working children under eighteen years of age for a certain specified number of hours per week. In this way, and in this way only, can the school keep under its supervision during the first difficult years of their working life the children who leave school to go to work.[1]

[1] It is interesting to note that our experience in regard to the wastefulness of boy and girl labor has been duplicated in England, and that the remedy of the continuation school was recommended in 1909 by the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of Distress. "We have therefore come to the conclusion," says the minority report, "that, if we want to turn into trained and competent workmen the 300,000 boys who now annually start wage-earning at something or another, there is only one practicable plan: *we must shorten the legally permissible hours of employment for boys, and we must require them to spend the hours thus set free in physical and technological training.*" The majority report also recommends raising the school-leaving age to fifteen and "school supervision until sixteen, the re-placement in school of boys not properly employed." It is unfortunately true that the English boy or girl who leaves school to go to work has, in the great majority of cases, reached a higher grade in school than the American boy or girl who goes to work. Our schools may or may not be better than, for example, the London "Council Schools." At any rate we

8. That provision be made for the regular attendance at special continuation schools of children between sixteen and eighteen who are not at work. In order that the school may keep in touch with the children who leave to go to work and in order that these children may not suffer from the demoralizing effects of idleness, the law should require the employer to return to the educational authorities the working certificate of any child leaving his employ; and it would then be the duty of the educational authorities to secure the immediate return of this child to school pending the finding of a new "job." Moreover the duty of securing the new "job" should devolve upon the local school authorities. That this can be done has been demonstrated by the successful work of the Employment Supervision Bureau which is now maintained by the Chicago Board of Education.

9. Finally, education should be made compulsory to some extent for all illiterate minors, a class of persons not provided for at present by the Illinois law. These illiterates would be young persons under twenty-one years of age, immigrants from Europe, or newcomers from other American states which at present make no provision, or inadequate provision, for compulsory school attendance. The new law should provide that all illiterate minors must attend continuation schools until they have reached the age of twenty-one, and the maintenance of such schools with day as well as evening classes should in this way be made mandatory upon the local educational authorities.

spend lavishly upon them. But a vast expenditure goes into the higher grades and high schools which a great majority of our working children never reach. The compulsory education period for the London boy or girl begins at five instead of seven. It is a serious question to which more thought should be given as to whether the child who is to leave school to go to work at the earliest age the law allows should not begin his period of compulsory attendance at five instead of seven years of age. If this is not done our continuation schools will be doing the work of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades instead of providing high grade technological training.

Pending such changes as have been indicated in the school and child labor laws of the state, the following recommendations, which we believe can be adopted by the Board of Education without additional legislative authority, are suggested:

1. That the system of recording attendance be so reorganized that the facts with reference to non-attendance may be ascertained.

2. That causes of absence justifying excuse by principals and teachers be enumerated and defined.

3. That a transfer system be installed which shall mean the following-up of every child to whom a transfer is issued, until he is re-enrolled in school.

4. That provision be made at the Parental School for truant girls.

5. That the school census be taken annually in the early autumn instead of, as at present, biennially in the spring or early summer, and that a permanent register of all minors be kept with a record of their school attendance. This change should be made pending the establishment under state supervision of a permanent census board.

6. That there be gradually developed a staff of school visitors whose function it shall be to relate the school to the home and to render such services as will tend to do away with causes now leading to non-attendance and truancy.

7. That the Vocational Supervision Bureau be developed and adequately supported so that every child may be saved from the demoralization of "hunting a job" and idling on the street or working at unsuitable employments. So long as we allow the poorest children in the community to go to work at the age of fourteen, the educational authorities should assume the obligation of keeping in touch with the child after he leaves school, finding suitable work for him if such work is available, and, in default of suitable work, exercising such pressure as the law allows to compel the return of the child to school.

Failing this, the community will continue to be troubled with the problem of "baby bandits" and juvenile crime.[1] The money expended on the Vocational Supervision Bureau will do much to prevent the expenditure of larger sums on probation officers, jails, and correctional institutions for delinquent boys and girls.

A further recommendation concerns the federal government. We adopt the suggestion that has already been made by those interested in the immigration problem that the federal immigration authorities at the various ports of entry to which immigrants are admitted should send the names and addresses of all immigrant minors to the educational authorities of the various cities and towns which the immigrants specify as their destination. Only in this way can the compulsory education laws be made of service to the immigrant children who are so sorely in need of their protection. Only in this way can the immigrant be promptly and properly Americanized. We recommend that the local educational authorities request the Commissioner-General of Immigration and the Secretary of Labor to direct that such action be taken.

[1] The report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws of 1909 may be profitably referred to again at this point. The minority report says, "With regard to the need for extending, to boys between fourteen and eighteen, something like the supervision and control exercised over them whilst at school, there is abundant evidence. At present, as in the past, it is mainly the 'juvenile adult,' between sixteen and twenty-one, who recruits our prison population. It is the absence of any system of control and organisation for the employment of the young which is universally declared to be one of the principal causes of wrong-doing. 'When a boy leaves school the hands of organisation and compulsion are lifted from his shoulders. If he is the son of very poor parents, his father has no influence, nor, indeed, a spare hour, to find work for him; he must find it for himself; generally he does find a job, and if it does not land him into a dead alley at eighteen he is fortunate. Or he drifts, and the tidy scholar soon becomes a ragged and defiant corner loafer. Over 80 per cent of our charges admit that they were not at work when they got into trouble'" (*Minority Report*, Part II, p. 653).

These recommendations we feel to be reasonable and conservative proposals. They are very far from including all desirable changes, but they include those for which it seems practicable to ask at the present time, and even these moderate changes will, we believe, contribute largely to the efficiency of the school system. We do not claim that they will wholly solve the problems connected with compulsory school attendance. The heavy burden resting on the heads of families among the poor should never be forgotten. We have called attention to the fact that the various laws for safeguarding the rights of children create new rights in them and lay new duties on the father. The performance of these duties necessitates meeting the cost of the child's support and care out of the father's earnings instead of from the earnings of the child; and this should mean, must mean, in fact, a higher standard of wages for the father. Only when wages have been raised to correspond to the rising standards of child-care, will the real weaknesses in the present system be wholly done away with.

It has not, perhaps, been sufficiently emphasized that truancy and non-attendance are primarily problems of poverty. It is because people are poor that they are tempted to take their children out of school and to put them to work while they are very young. "Man cannot live by bread alone" it was said many centuries ago; but it is also true that man cannot live by books alone. So long as vast numbers of people find it so difficult, and at times impossible, to provide adequate food and clothing for the children for whom the state is providing education, just so long will many children find it impossible to attend school regularly. The earlier compulsory laws in several states provided that children might be excused from compulsory attendance on the ground of poverty; that is, the law recognized that there were families in the community in which the child's earnings even at an early age were so necessary that the family's need of maintenance must be placed above

the child's need of an education. Later, the law abolished this exemption on the ground of poverty and became universal in its application; but the law in laying new burdens upon parents who are already so overburdened, gave no new resources with which to meet the added requirements.

In a few states free instruction has been supplemented by free books, not for poor children alone but for all children. In a few countries the cost of the child's support has been shared when the educational authorities have also added free dinners, but the dinners are free only to destitute children. It is doubtful whether free dinners will ever be acceptable in this country unless like free education and free books, they are made free for all. If this is not done, those who most need the free services will not endure the humiliation of accepting them on the condition of proving destitution. It is a hopeful sign that, in a democracy like ours, people resent assistance for which they are singled out solely on the ground of their poverty.[1] But it should not be overlooked that even if these supplementary costs of education are made free, as instruction has now generally been made free, there remain the other costs of the child's maintenance for which his own earnings are no longer available when the state makes his school attendance compulsory. Obviously, the only solution in accord with the standards of a democracy is such a permanent lifting of the wage levels as will make possible the higher standard of living that is, in practice, demanded by the state.

[1] It is interesting to note that when the free-school law of 1855 was passed, the proposal to make education free only for the poor was rejected. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction said in his report to the Nineteenth General Assembly of Illinois: "I cannot too strongly urge the importance of making education free, alike to the rich and the poor. The system which provides for the education only of the poor is necessarily unsuccessful. It has ever been, and ever will be, regarded as a part of the pauper system; and in a country like ours few will consent to appear on the pauper list." See Appendix I, doc. 10, p. 373.

APPENDIX I

EXTRACTS FROM DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE AGITATION FOR A SYSTEM OF FREE SCHOOLS AND A COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW

Extracts from (1) Communication of Governor Duncan to the General Assembly, 1834; (2) Report to the State Senate, 1834: *Organization of a State-Wide System of Free Schools;* (3) Memorial of the Illinois Education Society to the General Assembly, 1841; (4) Inaugural Address of Governor Ford, 1842; (5) Memorial in Behalf of Common Schools, 1844; (6) Message of Governor Ford to the General Assembly, 1844; (7) Report of the First State Superintendent of Common Schools, 1853; (8) Inaugural Message of Governor Matteson, 1853; (9) Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, 1853; (10) *ibid.*, 1855; (11) Message of Governor Matteson to the Twentieth General Assembly, 1857; (12) Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1867–68; (13) *ibid.*, 1869–70; (14) *ibid.*, 1871–72.

(1) *Extract from Communication of Governor Duncan to the Ninth General Assembly, December 3, 1834*

As every country is prosperous and respected in proportion to the virtue and intelligence of its inhabitants, the subject of education will doubtless again form an important part of your deliberations. The State possesses a fund devoted to this purpose, amounting to something over one hundred thousand dollars. As this amount, if invested in stocks, is too small to produce an annual income at all proportionate to the wants of the present generation, I would recommend that a system be adopted, by which the amount of this fund may be divided equally among the people, and applied to the purposes of education, which may also provide for the future division, upon the same principle, of such other sums as may hereafter be derived from the United States, on account of the three per cent. set apart from receipt on sales of the public lands, the school sections, and such other sources as can, with propriety, be provided.

In a State like this, many parts of which are sparsely settled by people encountering those difficulties incident to the improvement of a new country, it would be wrong to think of accumulating a fund out of our present resources, for the exclusive education of future generations; while those, who are in a few years to give character to our society, and to direct the operations of our government, are permitted to grow up without the possibility of obtaining an education—that greatest of human blessings.

It becomes us to use every exertion in our power to instruct those who are immediately dependent upon us, and leave to those who come after us, the rich revenues to be derived from the lands, canals and other improvements, to form a permanent fund to carry out any plans you may now adopt for the purposes of education.

This view of the case derives force from the fact, that the general government in setting apart this fund and a portion of the public land for education, intended it as an inducement to the early settlement of the country. It would seem unjust therefore, that those who have done so much to fill the national treasury, and advance the interests of the country, should be compelled to witness a fund, intended as a reward for their labors and sacrifices, laid by for the benefit of those who may come after them.

A government like ours, controlled and carried on by the will of the people, should be careful to use all the means in its power, to enlighten the minds of those who are destined to exercise so important a trust. This, and every consideration connected with the virtue, elevation, and happiness of man, and the character and prosperity of our state, and of our common country, calls upon you to establish some permanent system of common schools, by which an education may be placed within the power, nay, if possible, secured to every child in the State.

(2) *Organization of a State-Wide System of Free Schools (Extract from the Journal of the Senate, Ninth General Assembly, February, 1835)*

"Knowledge is power," and if knowledge be confined to a few, no matter by what name our government may be called, it would not be a republic, but an aristocracy. If, in our own community, a

certain portion of the people be permitted to remain in ignorance, that portion will be better fitted for the use of the other, than they will be to discharge the duties imposed upon them by their country. It is the true policy of a free government to remove all unnecessary distinctions among its citizens, and to make all equal, not by pulling down those who are above, but by raising those who are below. . . . .

Our government is not adapted to an ignorant community, and its free institutions cannot long be supported by an ignorant people. Would we then preserve and perpetuate the free institutions of our country, one thing is essential, and that is, universal education. He who stops short of that, stops short of universal liberty.

Universal education, then, is the great object to be gained, but how shall this be done? The answer is, by means of schools. . . . . Without the aid of schools, there can be no hope of an intelligent community. . . . .

What kind of schools will be most likely to accomplish our great object? In some portions of our country the schools have been left almost entirely to individual exertion. In those portions, many persons may be found who are unable to read, especially among the poorer class of people. The same may be said of the poor schools, which have been established by law in some of the states. In those states, the legislatures seem to have acted upon a wrong principle. The education of the poor was regarded as an act of charity. "Let the rich educate themselves," they said, "and we will educate the poor." Now, whether this principle be right or wrong, its operation will at least show that it would be impracticable to adopt it here: for where it has prevailed, according to the best information that can be obtained, one third part of the whole people are unable to read, and what is more unfortunate still, that third part is chiefly confined to the poor. This principle would do very well for a monarchy, whose policy was to keep a portion of its subjects in ignorance; but in a government like ours, where the doctrine of equal rights is so much cherished, it seems strangely inconsistent that a principle which degrades the poor man, because he is poor, should so long prevail. This is, in reality, its effect, for the poor man has no chance to rise in the world, unless it be by education. Give him this, and he is, at

once, placed upon a level with the rich—deny him this, and he is degraded.

In other portions a different principle has been adopted. Common education is regarded as a public benefit, and the schools are thrown open to all alike—they are free. The rich man's son, and the poor man's son meet on the same common level. Free schools have been adopted in the New-England states, New-York, and Ohio. What has been their effect? for the principle, in this case, as in others, can be tested by its effects. In every state where free schools have long prevailed, it is very difficult to find a single person who is unable to read and write. The principle may be further tested by a well authenticated fact. In New-York, the proportion of children in schools, compared with the whole population, is as one to three and nine-tenths; in Massachusetts, as one to four; in Connecticut, as one to between five and six; in Kentucky, Virginia, and Illinois, according to the most accurate estimation, as one to about thirteen.

Where free schools prevail, the state exacts of its people what they may have to give; of the rich man his money—of the poor man his children, educated and qualified to support the great principles of enlightened liberty. Free schools (and it cannot be said of any others) break down the unnatural distinctions in society. They carry out the doctrine of equality, and bring all upon a level, by making all enlightened. They have accomplished what no other schools have ever yet accomplished—universal education. We may, then, safely come to the conclusion, that, whatever may be the system adopted in this state, the schools should be free. They are indeed the only common schools upon which a free government can with safety rely.

This principle being settled, the inquiry then remains, what shall be the details, and how shall a system of common free schools be carried into practical operation in Illinois? . . . .

It has sometimes been said that it is not yet time to establish a system of schools in Illinois. It should be remarked, that if it be time to encourage the organization of a single school in the state, it is time to establish a system like this. This system proposes no compulsory measures; it interferes with no school district already

formed. It merely proposes to encourage education by applying such means as are available, and it prescribes the manner in which it will apply them. Never were the people of Illinois more active and zealous on the subject of education, than they are now. They not only expect but they demand a better system of schools; and they have spoken to that effect, both at home and in their late convention; in a voice too that will be understood. So popular indeed is the subject of education now in this state, that it is advocated in every newspaper; its praises are sung on every "stump" and scarce an individual can be found who is opposed to it.

There is another consideration which should not remain unnoticed. If the state should neglect to establish public schools, many individuals would be compelled to organize private ones, for the education of their own children. These would be serious impediments, for when the state should attempt (and this will be done sooner or later,) to establish a general system of schools and seminaries, it could not then, as it can now, rely upon the influence and aid of such individuals. Their sympathies and feelings would be very naturally enlisted in favor of the schools of their own creation, and their children would not attend the public schools, the consequence of which would be to lessen the respectability of the public schools and deprive them of much of their usefulness. Unimportant as this may seem to be, it is a serious evil, and one which the state of New-York, with probably the best system of common schools in the country, has not yet overcome. Ought such a system be established in Illinois? This is a question that we shall be called upon to decide and in deciding it, let it be remembered that we pass judgment upon no ordinary subject. This is a measure that will affect the interest of every parent and child in the community; a measure whose influence will extend to millions now unborn, through ages yet to come. Our future liberty or future bondage may depend upon the decision of this, or a similar question. The time may yet come—it will come—when we must rally around our common schools, or bow our necks before the throne of arbitrary power. . . . . True to ourselves, to our children and our country, let us cling to our common schools, and lay firmly and deeply the only foundation on which we can safely rely.

Leave is, therefore, asked to introduce the accompanying Resolution and Bill. All of which is respectfully submitted.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, the subject of education is of deep and abiding interest to the inhabitants of Illinois; whereas, the time has arrived, when some efficient means ought to be adopted to effect the establishment of a uniform system of common schools, that will secure to all classes at least a common education, to accomplish which, it will be necessary to establish a seminary in each county in the state, for the qualification of teachers for the common schools within the county; whereas the present resources of the country are altogether insufficient to effect this desirable object, and it is not in the nature of things, that the people of the state of Illinois, however animated their enterprise may be, can, with hope of success, engage in an undertaking of such magnitude, while all their resources are continually drawn from them to the general government, by the sale of the public domain; and, whereas, the payment of the national debt has in a measure released the lien of the general government to the lands within this state, and has left much power in the hands of Congress to dispose of the public domain, for objects of permanent utility and advantage, by appropriating, for the advancement of knowledge, a portion of those lands: Therefore, to enable this state to unite a uniform system of common schools and county seminaries, as indicated, and for that purpose to establish a seminary in each county for the qualification of teachers, and instruction in the higher branches of education, not however with such endowments as would exclude the hope of dependence upon individual enterprise and popular co-operation:

Resolved, by the General Assembly of the State of Illinois, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress be requested to use all honorable means to procure the passage of a law by Congress, granting to the state of Illinois a reasonable quantity of land, or a portion of the proceeds of the sales of the public lands within this state, to be appropriated, under the direction of the legislature, towards the support of the several county seminaries, for the qualification of teachers for the common schools.

(3) *Memorial of the Illinois Education Society to the General Assembly, 1841*

To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Illinois:

GENTLEMEN: The Illinois Education Society, assembled in Springfield, feeling a deep interest in the cause of education, and especially in the improvement of the school laws, by such slight amendments as experience has suggested to be necessary, would respectfully submit to your consideration the following suggestions.

1st. That a reference to the act of 1818, which gave rise to our school funds, shows that Congress designed the general school fund "to be appropriated by the Legislature of the State for the encouragement of learning," in contradistinction to the grant of section numbered sixteen in every township which was "granted to the State for the use of the inhabitants of such township for the use of schools," that the latter was a grant to promote the education of the children of a particular township, whilst the former extended to the children of the whole State, irrespective of their place of residence. . . . . The legitimate conclusion from these considerations is, that the interest upon the school fund should not be distributed to counties, according to population, but according to the number of children in school. The blessings of the fund can only be distributed to the children in school; and it is a singular position to assume, that the children in one county shall be the peculiar objects of legislative favor, because a great many of the children of the county do not attend school, and that the children of another county shall be less favored, because all or nearly all of its children are in school. If the number of children in schools is made the basis of distribution, equal justice will be done to all the children of the State, and the Legislature will be faithful to the high trust committed to their charge.

2d. As your memorialists desire that the legislation upon the subject of our township funds should be the most perfect, and that those funds should be most cautiously guarded, and as many of the people do believe that our township funds, though loaned at 12 per cent. will not (after paying all the losses, charges, and expenses incident to their management) actually pay more than six per cent. to the support of the schools, and that not punctually, (a matter of

great moment to the school teacher,) they would recommend that the trustees of incorporated townships, and the school commissioners, should set forth in the reports, (which they are now by law required to make,) how much of the township fund is hopelessly lost—how much is doubtful—how much is in suit—how much is annually paid out to lawyers, clerks, sheriffs, and all others, in the management of said funds; and what proportion of the interest is paid punctually. . . . .

4th. If a majority of three-fourths of the legal voters of a township should desire to tax themselves, to a limited amount, for school purposes, they should be permitted so to do. What evils could grow out of trusting three-fourths of the people of a township with the liberty of thus acting for themselves, in the education of their children? This action would only affect the township concerned, and your memorialists do not believe that any portion of the people will pay more for education than it is worth, or that the power of improving the schools of a township should be withheld from the people thereof, when they perceive the importance of cultivating the minds of their children, and are willing to tax themselves, that the light of science may shine upon them.

5th. The Legislature has wisely determined, that no teacher shall be permitted to receive more than half of his salary from the general school fund. Would it not be wise to give the townships which are, or shall become, incorporated, the power of making a similar provision in relation to their local funds, and of appropriating their surplus, if any, to the purposes of education? The reason of this suggestion is obvious. If the educational funds entirely relieve parents from contributing towards the education of their children, they lose that interest in the schools which must be kept up if we have good schools. . . . .

6th. Upon the same principle of helping those who are willing to help themselves, your memorialists would suggest that, after the lapse of one year no school should be permitted to draw any portion from the State fund, unless the same should be kept up for the space of three months; and that after two years no school should derive any aid from said fund, unless kept up for the space of three months, and also, unless it should be taught in a house erected upon a school

lot secured to the trustees of townships, as is now provided by law, (see Acts of 1835,) with this further principle annexed, that the schools taught in said houses should be open, upon equal terms, to all white applicants of good moral character, irrespective of religious opinions. . . . .

8th. Let a superintendent of common schools be appointed—a man of talents—and yet a laborious and self-denying man. One who would go into all the dark corners, as well as bright spots, of the State, and labor day in and day out for the improvement of our common schools. Such a man would be of great use, not only in awaking the public to the importance of education, but by collecting facts for the information of your honorable body, and the people. . . . . He would (a matter of no mean moment to the success of common school education) do much towards bringing about a steady and uniform administration of the law. . . . .

(4) *Misuse of School Funds (Extract from the Inaugural Address of Governor Ford to the General Assembly, December 5, 1842)*

As it has already been stated, the school fund amounts to $808,-104.39. Of this, $335,592.21 is derived from the surplus revenue; $415,575.52 from the three per cent. school fund, and $56,917.66 from the sale of seminary lands. It appears also, that there is now due to the State on account of the three per cent. fund, the further sum of $37,206.39; and $41,909.35 appears to be coming to the State as our distributive share of the proceeds of the sales of the public lands. This latter sum, if received, the General Assembly can rightfully appropriate as the wants of the State may require, but the former is sacred to the purpose of education. It has been our former practice, on account of a deficiency of revenue and too much fear of levying adequate taxes, to borrow this fund as it occurred, to pay the current expenses of government, and promise an interest of six per cent. to be distributed amongst the several counties. Good faith to ourselves, to the United States from which it is derived, and to the rising generation, created the most sacred obligation that this interest should have been punctually paid in good money. On the contrary,

it has been paid, for nearly a year past, in depreciated paper, and there is no provision by existing laws, for paying it otherwise in future. It does seem then that if we find ourselves unable to make payment in cash or its just equivalent, it is little better than robbery to continue the system of borrowing, and a guilt but little less is contracted, if we refuse to make provision for paying interest in good funds, on the sum already borrowed. It is unfortunate that no system of revenue and expenditure has ever existed in this State; the appropriations have generally exceeded the revenue, and hence the necessity of borrowing the school fund as a means of paying current expenses.

(5) *Extracts from a Memorial in Behalf of Common Schools, Passed at the Convention Held at Peoria in October, 1844*

[The first sections of the report contain recommendations dealing with the possible duties of state and county superintendents of schools, the school fund, etc.]

§ 8. . . . . A majority of the inhabitants of a school district may vote to raise a tax for purchasing, building, or repairing school houses, and to defray the expenses attendant upon the schools.

§ 9. The teachers to keep a faithful schedule of the attendance of all scholars, the correctness of which is to be certified to by the directors, upon which schedule the teacher shall draw his proportion of the public funds, *pro rata*, according to the number of days in attendance by the scholars.

§ 10. No teacher to be allowed any proportion of the public funds if he has not passed an examination and received a certificate to teach; and no school district shall be allowed any portion of the fund which does not keep up a regular school at least three months in the year.

§ 11. [Method of collecting the school tax.] . . . .

The above embodies the principal changes which the convention thought best to attempt at the present session; and in conformity with the instructions of the conventions, we would ask permission to lay before your honorable bodies some of the reasons why a change of system is desired, and some arguments in favor of the above plan.

Public welfare affected by education.—Education is a measure, not merely affecting individual welfare, but one in which the public —the State—is concerned. Were the consequences of its neglect or attention confined entirely to individuals as they should be uneducated or educated, it might be questionable whether society could rightly interfere in its direction. But it is far otherwise. . . . .

Again, in our social organization we have submitted ourselves to be governed upon republican principles. By our votes we elect our rulers, and the vote of one counts equally with that of any other. Howsoever important, then, a good government may be, it is not more so than that we have good voters. The former necessarily depends upon the latter. . . . .

Change of present system necessary.—That our present school laws are insufficient to accomplish the objects of their enactment, requires no argument to prove. Our schools evidently are not what they should be. There is a listless apathy concerning them, more to be deprecated than fiery opposition, reigning almost supreme throughout the State. We need the adoption of some measures that shall arouse us from this death-like stupor, that shall infuse vigor into the frame, and induce to healthy, steady, persevering action. By some means the people must be made to *feel* that their most vital interests are at hazard, and that no slight efforts will suffice to secure them. . . . .

Illinois is peculiarly situated, and in the minor details of a system, we must depend mainly upon our own experience, and the knowledge of our own condition and necessities. Here we can find little amongst the systems of the old States to profit us. We have township as well as State funds, for the use and preservation of which we are to provide; there are the towns and the villages; the sparse settlements of the prairies; the scattered ones along the edges of large groves; the comparatively thick ones around small groves, often embracing parts of several townships;—all these varied circumstances, with numerous others, are to be considered, and there is little in the old States of like character. . . . .

Taxation for the support of schools.—We come now to consider, finally, the one great requisite of the proposed plan—*taxation.* Each of the other parts are considered essential, yet they are but machinery

to work this result. We come out frankly and boldly, and acknowledge the whole system—every effort, is intended only as a means of allurement to draw the people into the grasp of this most awful monster—*a school tax.*

But start not back in alarm. After all, he may not be so terrible as some have perhaps imagined. Used with skill and judgment, no other power can accomplish what he will; no other can work such changes in your common schools, and it is vain that we attempt to dispense with his services. All experience throughout the Union is in favor of his employment. We do not, however, propose coercing any to employ him who prefer to let him alone. All we ask is, to give those permission to use him who are so inclined; and others, when they witness his subordination, and power to work for the cause of education, will doubtless desire themselves to try his services. . . . .

School tax necessary and right.—We believe our former position, that education is a public benefit, and indispensable to the welfare of the State, was sustained. It will also be granted, that parents and guardians of numerous children throughout the State, cannot afford them the means of education, and whatever instruction they may receive, must be paid for by others. That the State appropriation is sufficient, no one will contend. . . . . Why, it will not pay incidental expenses, let alone the building and repairing of the school house and the teacher's salary.

To pay for schooling the poor.—And will it be contended that all the balance shall be supplied by those sending to school? In this event poor parents must keep their children at home, or they must be exempted by law, and payment be forced from others sending to schools. The first, it is the effort of all to avoid, and the latter is most inexpedient and unjust.

We acknowledge there is a private—individual—as well as public benefit derived from education, and all who are able should, therefore, be made to pay for it. But the expense of educating all the poor children; who shall pay for this? A large portion of the population have just means sufficient to send their own children to school; and because they desire to educate them to the best of their ability, shall they be ground to the dust by being made to pay for the instruc-

tion of their neighbor's children? Many, besides needing the services of their children in daily labor, know not how to incur the expense of schooling; shall they be compelled to keep their children at home by being informed if they send, they must not only foot the bill for their own children but the more they send, the more they must pay for others? Manifestly it is inexpedient.

If education be a public good, and there are those who must be educated at the expense of others, the expense should fall where it belongs—upon the public. It is wrong to make a portion of the people, no more able than others, pay for what is acknowledged to be for the good of all. Education is no exception to other public benefits. It inures, to be sure, to individual advantage, and what measure of general utility does not? Then let the expense for this, as for other public objects, fall where it belongs—upon the property throughout the State. Any other method of compelling support is unequal—most unjust. . . . .

A school tax expedient in Illinois.—The long continuance of this method for supporting schools in many States; their warm commendations of it; and above all, the excellence of their common schools, where they are wholly or partially supported by a tax; speaks to us in its favor in the strong language of experience. There remains then, nothing for Illinois to do, but to adopt the practice. If a school tax be right and necessary, it would seem the people should be required to raise one, and the legislature should trust to the good sense and honesty of the people to sustain them in enforcing it. . . . .

A majority vote should decide.—At the last session of the Legislature, something of this character was introduced; but it was proposed to require a vote of two-thirds of the people of a township to levy a school tax. We do most earnestly pray your honorable bodies, to let the decision rest with a majority of the votes cast. Why should there be any fear of abuse under the law? Certainly there is no danger of having too good schools; that too much will be paid to teachers; or that money will be squandered by those who themselves pay it. To require a two-thirds vote looks very much as though one or all of these results were to be feared; and even should the event, in an occasional instance, prove the apprehension to have been well grounded, is it not probable that ten townships or districts would

suffer from lack of means to support their schools, where one would suffer from a super-abundance that had been raised by a tax? The people generally are not so fond of paying large sums for school purposes, that any great restraint need be cast around them. In other public measures, it is considered safe to trust to a majority to manage; and we can see no great danger in education, or of its too rapid promotion, that it should be singled out to be used with caution. . . . . The more this subject of common school instruction is dwelt upon, the more transcendingly important does it appear. Never can more be done for it, than its due—never can it be estimated above its worth; and it is a source of the highest gratification to labor for its furtherance. . . . . The subject is committed to your honorable bodies with the fullest confidence that it will receive at your hands, the attention it merits; and that such measures will be adopted, as in your united wisdom will appear best calculated to promote the object of all objects—*the education of the people.*

While we rejoice in the republican motto, "Let the people rule," shall we ever forget that intelligence and virtue must be the actuating principles of our government? What but these constitute the base of the entire fabric of our republican institutions? . . . . Even now one-seventeenth part of our population over twenty years of age, can neither read nor write. . . . . Let it come home to us, that the district school supplies the means—the only means—of qualifying at least nineteen-twentieths of the children of our State, to exercise the right of suffrage; that this is the means—the only means—by which nineteen-twentieths of the men—yes, and the wives and mothers too —soon to be on the stage of action, are to be prepared for discharging the high and responsible duties of life.

Our object is "not to rear a small number of individuals, who may be regarded as prodigies in an ignorant and admiring age; but to diffuse as widely as possible that degree of cultivation, which may enable the bulk of the people to possess all the intellectual and moral improvement of which their nature is susceptible." It is too true that schooling does not always accomplish this; that men do not become educated according to their attendance upon school. Occasionally we find one who signs a deed with his mark, better educated, better qualified to perform the duties of a man and citizen

than another who passed all the days of his boyhood and youth at the school house, academy or college. But these instances are only exceptions to the general rule. No father, worthy of the name, would desire to try the experiment with his son. The mechanical operations of reading and writing, and instructions in elementary branches of knowledge, will be imparted to him as the ground-work of future usefulness; and to acquire them, the great mass must resort to the district school. For this the district school is prized; for this we should, as far as in our power, compel all to render it support and countenance. We would, if possible, have no school too good for the child of humble origin; none too poor for the child of wealth and affluence. (The Memorial of a Committee of the State School Convention, held at Peoria in October last, upon the subject of Common School Education, December 7, 1844.)

(6) *Extract from the First Message of Governor Ford to the General Assembly, 1844*

The subject of common school education must necessarily attract your attention. It is one of the utmost importance to the well being of the people; the due provision for which is essential to the perpetuity of enlightened republicanism, and absolutely necessary to a proper and just administration of our democratic institutions. No system on this subject has yet been adopted, which has been satisfactory to the people; or which has been executed with efficiency in all parts of the State. But little statistical or other information of the actual operation of existing laws on this subject, has yet been collected to enable the General Assembly to legislate upon it with an enlightened judgment. Some means ought to be adopted, to collect this information; and I can think of none better than the appointment by your honorable bodies of an agent, at once faithful and competent to the task; whose duty it would be to travel into every country, and if possible every neighborhood; and by a careful inspection and examination, collect this information for the use of the Legislature; and by lectures and every other means in his power, endeavor to impress upon the people the overwhelming importance of the education of their children. Such an agent ought to be a rare man; endowed with talents, zeal, and discretion of the highest order.

Money expended on such an agency, if ably, faithfully and zealously executed, would be approved by the people, as being more for their benefit, than any other appropriation whatever. And if taxed for it, they would feel that they had been taxed for a purpose of the highest utility.

(7) *Extracts from the Report of the First State Superintendent of Common Schools to the General Assembly, 1847*

The fact of only fifty-seven counties having complied with the request contained in my circular of the third of September, shows a most lamentable apathy and want of interest in the cause of education throughout the State. While some of the counties exhibit a commendable zeal and interest in the cause, others have manifested a most culpable negligence. It was not to be expected that very rapid progress would at first be made toward maintaining a system of common schools, which time and experience alone can perfect.

In our sister States, where common schools have, for years, been the objects of not only the wise and fostering care of legislation, but have elicited in their behalf, the zeal and efforts of the richest and most talented citizens, although they have advanced rapidly, yet according to their own reports and official statements much yet remains to be done. The practical operation of any school law in our own State, is yet to be tried. Notwithstanding our statute book has been encumbered with school laws, no one of them has ever been carried into vigorous and effective operation; and our people were, at the time the present law was enacted, as inexperienced in all the details necessary for the successful administration of the law, as if the question had been presented to them for the first time. . . . .

It is the want of information on the subject of popular education, that is the cause of the painful apathy which prevails amongst the people; a want of knowledge of the progress our sister States have made, and the means by which they have been enabled to carry their different systems into practical and successful operation. . . . .

Special taxes.—The 84th section of the school law, authorizes the legal voters, in the different school districts, to meet together and tax themselves for school purposes, building and repairing school

houses, &c. In the fifty-seven counties from which I have received returns, only twenty-one have levied this tax.

. . . . In the county of Cook alone, the inhabitants—deeply impressed with the importance of the common school education—have raised, by voluntary taxation, under the provision of the law, the large sum of five thousand two hundred and four dollars, which will continue and increase as an annual tax; and what has been the result? Their schools are in a most flourishing condition. They have erected large and elegant school houses, procured competent and accomplished teachers, and have two thousand and ninety-five children in daily attendance at these nurseries of learning. . . . .

The large property holders are, in general, most strongly opposed to the assessment of taxes for school purposes. They are against it, because they are able to educate their own children without the aid of any public fund, and are unwilling to have their property taxed for the education of the poorer classes that have no property to tax.

(8) *Extract from the Inaugural Address of Governor Matteson to the Eighteenth General Assembly, 1853*

I desire to invite your particular attention to the vital subject of education. We have a mixed population, emigrating from every sister state, and from almost every clime of the old world, and in order to be most beneficial, our schools should be conducted on a broad and comprehensive basis. Intelligence and virtue are at the foundation of our system of government, and the germs of these are best extended in our common schools. There are many, and perhaps very just complaints against the operation of the present school law, and it may well be doubted whether it is not too voluminous and extensive to be fully understood and comprehended by all those who are intrusted with the direction of common schools. I submit to your consideration whether the desired end would not be better promoted by an entire repeal of all laws regulating common schools, and the adoption of a simple system, plain in its provisions, supported by tax upon property, when the school fund is not sufficient for such purpose, and made free to all alike. I desire to see a system by which every child, whatever its condition or parentage, may have an opportunity to obtain an education equal with the most affluent of

our state—such as will fit them for any grade or condition of life. Our central position, our great commercial connections, our internal wealth, everything about us indicate for us a destiny of which any people might well be proud, but the most sacred duty demands of us that the rising generation be fitted in their intellectual capacity to give proper direction to these great interests. Should such modification of our school law be considered by the general assembly to be premature, I would recommend that a general superintendent of common schools be authorized, with such compensation as would command the best talent of our state, whose duty it should be to visit every school district in the state, having power to cause such organization, and the uniform use of such books as are best adapted to the improvement of the pupils.

(9) *Extract from the Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools to the Eighteenth General Assembly, 1853*

The sum raised by *ad valorem* tax, for the support of schools in forty-six counties is reported to be $51,101.14. . . . . In twenty counties out of seventy-four, no such tax was levied, and the commissioners of eight counties, in consequence of the default of township treasurers, were able to consider nothing relative thereto.

In connection with this subject I take occasion to remark, that in many parts of the state, the question of providing by taxation for a system of *Free Schools*, is beginning to be agitated. . . . . While many weighty reasons are urged in support of such a policy, there will be found those who regard it as a scheme of state dictation, wholly at war with the rights of individuals, and oppressive in exacting contributions from such as are unable or unwilling, from various motives, to participate in its advantages. . . . .

Under the law as it now stands, a majority of the legal voters of districts, at any meeting properly convened, have it in their power, by a majority of voters, to levy a tax for the support of schools, thus enabling them, if they see proper, to avail themselves of all the advantages of free schools. I am not aware that in a single instance this has been done, nor can any motive be assigned for the action of the people in this respect, unless it grow out of a preference for the system which now prevails. . . . .

The entire number of common schools in operation in the state in the course of the past year is estimated at seven thousand and thirty-one. Of the schools reported, two thousand three hundred and ninety-seven were taught by male teachers, and the balance by females. The number of female teachers employed seem to be steadily increasing, and there can be but little doubt that in districts where pupils are mostly new beginners they are better adapted to guide the youthful mind than instructors of the rougher and sterner sex. . . . .

The census of 1850 shows the number of white children in the state to be 496,595. In the 72 counties from which reports are furnished, the number for the past year is stated, on the authority of township treasurers, to be 361,954. Of this number 139,255 are represented as having been in attendance at the common schools.

(10) *Extracts from the Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Nineteenth General Assembly, 1855*

I propose, in the next place, to show that it is both the duty and the interest of the state to provide for the education of her children.

In the preamble to our state constitution we acknowledge ourselves to be "grateful to Almighty God for the civil and religious liberty which we have been permitted to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing on our endeavors to secure and transmit the same unimpaired to succeeding generations, and, in order to form a more perfect government, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity," &c.

Were the inquiry now to be urged, how are these blessings best secured? I am persuaded that the unanimous answer would be, by diffusing among the people knowledge and virtue. To secure the great ends of the constitution, it is important that the children in our state be trained so as to fully comprehend the principles of our constitution and the true basis of civil and religious liberty. . . . . And to make it sure, it must not be left to chance, nor to private enterprise: it must be *absolutely secured*, by timely and judicious legislation. But parsimonious men will talk of economy, and of

the necessity of retrenchment. It is cheaper to sustain schools than poor houses, and courts, and prisons; and as certainly as education is neglected, ignorance and vice, and pauperism and prisons, must draw heavily upon our treasury. The only prevention of these evils is in intellectual and moral expansion. We hesitate not, for the common defence, to invest money for the building of forts, for the manufacture of arms, the training of soldiers, for military academies, and the general discipline and munitions of war. How much more important is it to educate the citizen, and to instruct the children of the citizen in the arts of peace and the principles of justice, that they may preserve the one and administer the other. . . . . To make education general, you must make tuition free, still, however, sustaining the schools, in some measure, out of the property of the country, by taxation. . . . .

I cannot too strongly urge the importance of making education free, alike to the rich and the poor. The system which provides for the education only of the poor is necessarily unsuccessful. It has ever been, and ever will be, regarded as a part of the pauper system; and in a country like ours few will consent to appear on the pauper list.

The only way to bring in the children of the poor is to bring them in on the same footing, and on terms of equality with those of the rich. Make the school-room just as free and as much common property as our public highways, or the air we breathe. Let the poorest child feel that he has just as much right to be there as has the child of the millionaire, and that the only distinction known is that of merit, and then you will reach the poor, while no injury will be done to the rich. This is, in fact, the only plan which is properly in keeping with our republican institutions. It is predicated on the maxim, that "all men are born free and equal"; which equality is preserved until destroyed by the varying degrees of personal merit. It commends itself to our common sense of justice, and must, ultimately, command the respect of all classes of the people. . . . .

Upon the whole, I am fully persuaded that the free schools, as a general thing, are better than even the most select private ones. There are more people interested in them, and there is a public spirit at work in their support. Even small children seem to realize that

through the schools they are brought into connection with the commonwealth; they appreciate their high position, and they are proud to honor the institution which has elevated them. The system has met with general approval in every state where it has been tried. . . . . At this time, every free state, except one, and I regret to say that one is Illinois, has adopted it. Several states have even incorporated in their constitutions provision for the support of schools. The slave states are waking up on the subject, and are adopting efficient systems of common school education. The general government has fully recognized the principle, by liberal donations of lands in all the townships of the new states, for free education. In short, the free school system may now be said to have the national sanction, and is looked to with admiration from the Old World, many states of which have even adopted it. Surely, surely, our state will no longer neglect it!

The plan which I propose is, *first of all*, to simplify our school law, so that it may be understood by all. The prominent feature of the system which I have thought proper to recommend, recognizing the first principle, that education should be supported by a tax on property, gives to every child of the state a right to be educated, and to all an equal right. This principle of equality of right is made prominent. Its development necessarily requires that the proceeds of the school fund be so distributed as to afford equal facilities to all. If the distribution should be based entirely on population, it would give to the less populous counties and districts a comparatively small amount of money, while at the same time there is but little difference between the expense of a large and a small school of the same grade. In the country, or less populous districts, the property would have to bear much heavier taxation for the support of the schools, while in large cities and thickly settled districts, the assessment would be far less; or, if the taxation were uniform, the schools then would be more than supported. Either the first principle would have to be abandoned, or the property in some districts would have to contribute from fifty to one hundred per cent more than in others. If the principle be correct, that the property of the state should educate the children of the state, on account of the security and additional value which education gives to property, and the permanency

and security which it insures to our civil, social, and religious institutions, there is no reason why the burthen should not be equal. . . . .

TOTALS FOR COUNTIES FOR 1854

(79 counties reported; 21 counties not reported)

Amount of school sales	$42,972.75
Quantity of unsold school land (acres)	48,313
No. schools taught	4,211
No. schools taught by males	2,491
No. schools taught by females	1,555
No. schools employing males and females at same time	115
No. schools employing males and females at different periods	1,644
Highest number of children taught	135,521
Average number who have attended school	80,681
No. white children under 21 years of age	401,460
No. white children between the ages of 5 and 21	200,178
Average no. months in year in which school has been taught	6
No. schools in which the average number of children taught is under thirty	2,175
Average number of scholars in each school	30
Average monthly compensation of male teachers	$25.00
Average monthly compensation of female teachers	$12.00

(11) *Extracts from the Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1867–68*

The larger portion of the aggregate number of colored people in the State are dispersed through the different counties and school districts, in small groups of one, two, or three families, not enough to maintain separate schools for themselves, even with the help of the pittance paid for school taxes by such of them as are property holders. This whole dispersed class of our colored population are without the means of a common school education for their children; the law does not contemplate their co-attendance with white children, and they are without recourse of any kind. I think it safe to say that at least one-half of the six thousand colored children, between the ages of six and twenty-one, are in this helpless condition in respect to schools. . . . .

The question of compulsory attendance has been widely discussed in all parts of the country during the past two years. While there may be doubts as to whether that would be the best remedy for us, all things considered, those doubts do not, in my estimation, attach to the question of legal competency, but only to that of expediency. Every State school system must of necessity rest down at some points upon the idea of compulsion—of the supreme authority of a commonwealth to do what is deemed needful for the well-being of the body politic. The primary maxim upon which every free school law is grounded and defended, and which has become a part of the settled convictions of the American people—that a State has a just moral claim upon so much of the property of the people as may be required to educate its children and fit them for usefulness as good citizens—involves the idea of compulsion in the last resort. The State two mill tax, which is the legitimate fruitage of that maxim, is collected from all alike, whether willing or unwilling. Those who refuse to pay the tax are compelled to pay it; there is compulsory school-tax paying all over the State. And the power that justly demands and enforces, in virtue of its benevolent care and sovereignty, the payment of a tax for the noble purpose of educating and uplifting the people, may surely provide that the end sought shall not fail of attainment through the indifference or perverseness of others. The hand that forcibly takes the tax-money from the pocket of an unwilling non-resident, to support a school in a distant district in which he has no personal interest, is at least as rough and arbitrary as would be the hand that forcibly leads the children to the doors of the school-room. If the former act is right, though the very essence of compulsion, how can the latter be wrong? Indeed, all general laws, both state and national, involve and imply the right of compulsion, in the last resort, and could not be otherwise executed. So far, therefore, as the question of the constitutional right and competency of a State to pass a school law that shall be compulsory in regard to attendance, is concerned, it seems to me there can be no doubt. If the fundamental principle is conceded, the rest is a logical sequence—if a State may enact a general free school law, it may see that its supreme purpose is not defeated. And what is that purpose but the education of all the children between the prescribed ages? and how can this be

if they do not attend? Regarded from this stand-point, may not the more rational question be: Has the State a right to stop short of compulsory attendance? to leave it optional with the very persons to be benefited, whether, after all, the whole system shall be a success or a failure? Hence, the question of compulsory attendance is not one of jurisdiction or competency on the part of the State, but of expediency only. It may be that a general compulsory law would not work well in a country and people like ours. It will certainly be a grander success if we can make the schools so good, so attractive and pleasant, that all will seek them and be drawn to them by a higher and nobler compulsion—the love of knowledge, of improvement, of culture, of country and of God. But in whatever aspect it is considered, and whatsoever remedy may be the best, absenteeism is an evil of alarming magnitude, and must continue to receive the earnest attention of the friends of public education, until attendance upon the public schools shall be universal, and the system shall secure the maximum amount of good of which it is capable.

(12) *Extracts from the Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1869–70*

Absenteeism in 1869.—Attention has been called to this evil in former reports. The continuance and magnitude of it, demand, however, a continued consideration. It is confessedly the great drawback upon our free school system; the problem of its extinction remains, in some important respects, the most perplexing, as well as the most weighty we have to deal with.

Extent of the evil.—. . . . One out of every five or six not enrolled at all, not in school so much as one day; but hundreds, yes, thousands, who were enrolled, but who were not present more than ten days, twenty days, a month—and so upward—but falling short, in all degrees, of the maximum, the six and a half months the schools were open. Absence, truancy, and tardiness, are to be reckoned all three together to get at the real amount of failure. The complete statistics show that while about nineteen out of every hundred due there, have not appeared at school at all, of those who did appear, not more than about sixty-five out of the hundred have been in regular daily attendance during the average time the schools were open. Of children

due at school, therefore—that is to say, of all in the State between the ages of six and twenty-one—not more than forty to forty-five per cent. have been in regular daily attendance during the school time provided for them by the State. . . . .

Its cause.—But, having school privileges, many of those who need them most, hold school opportunities at light value, and make but slightest use of them. Then, many parents lack energy and enterprise sufficient even to keep their children at school. Some, who are abundantly able to do so, fail to provide their children with clothing suitable to appear at school in. Others have lost control of their children; not a few boys and girls within our State are not in school simply because they *won't* go, and the parents have lost authority to make them go. Very large numbers are kept at home for their services at labor; in shops and factories, upon the farm and in the house. . . . .

The cure.—It is doubtful whether any thorough preventive of this evil will be found short of State compulsion. Upon the competency of the State to enact laws which would make a certain amount of attendance at school compulsory, and upon the expediency of so doing, remark was made in my last report. The position then assumed, and which is still believed to be irrefutable, was, that it is competent for a State to provide, by appropriate enactments, that all persons of suitable age, and of proper mental and physical ability, shall attend the public schools for a certain specified period, unless otherwise educated. The States of Missouri, Nevada, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and I think two or three others, have already prepared the way for the ultimate arrest by legislative interposition, of the evils of voluntary absenteeism, and truancy, by incorporating the necessary provisions into their respective State Constitutions. In those of Arkansas and South Carolina, the enactment of such laws is peremptorily required, while in the organic laws of the other States named, the provisions on the subject are only permissive. . . . .

The theory is that a State may of right do whatever is essential, or which it believes to be essential to its own preservation, welfare and perpetuity; that the safety and continuance of a republican government requires the education of the whole body of the people;

and hence that a State may rightfully do whatever may be found really necessary to secure that end. This is the rock upon which the whole American doctrine of free public education by State law, rests down, firmly and immovably. And upon the self-same foundation, in virtue of the same high moral and political necessity, and of strictest logical sequence, abides the right of providing for compulsory attendance, in the last resort. . . . . To provide, at great expense, by the supreme authority of the State, for the free education of all the youth of the State, and at the same time leave all at liberty to reject what is thus provided, is to allow a self-destructive principle to lurk in the very citadel of the whole system.

But until we reach the point where such a law can be passed and sustained, and, indeed, as a means either of reaching it, or of doing what would be better—of making such a law unnecessary—the only available remedy against this evil will be the formation of a right public opinion touching this whole matter of schools, and of regular, punctual school-attendance. . . . .

Let every voice and every agency, that promises good, be enlisted, and employed in speaking and in acting upon this great subject, till it is everywhere considered the basest of crimes, to be a parent, and then deliberately or thoughtlessly to deprive the child of the blessed boon of obtaining all the free knowledge he can acquire; or, to be a citizen, and connive at or allow a child to live in this intelligent age, without being, if no other way offers, compelled to learn so much of truth as shall raise him above the danger and the suspicion of barbarism. . . . .

The free school system in Illinois. . . . . First of all should be mentioned the great fact that the free school system of Illinois has at last been firmly entrenched in the organic law of the State. Prior to the adoption of the new constitution, the whole system, with its myriad ramifications, its vast accumulations of funds and property, and its untold blessings to the people of the present and the future, had no other foundation than a simple act of the Legislature. . . . .

The formal recognition in the fundamental law of the claims of free popular education was due to the dignity of the State itself. Illinois could not longer have afforded to remain the only free American State which deemed the subject of public education unworthy

a place in her Constitution. . . . . If any thing is settled by the conduct of nations, the teachings of experience, the logic of events, and the siftings and deductions of human thought, in this latter half of the nineteenth century, *this* is settled.

(13) *The Educational Rights of Children* (*Extract from the Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1871–72*)

. . . . I now approach the consideration of another question of great practical moment, one that is regarded by many as "the most important school question of modern times," namely: How shall the evil of voluntary absenteeism be arrested, and all the youth of the State, not otherwise educated, be brought into the public schools? In other words, how shall the children of the State be protected against the wrongs and evils of illiteracy, and secured in their educational rights? . . . .

The subject thus introduced is now prominently before the American people. . . . . It is usually considered under the form of "compulsory school attendance"—sometimes under the better form of "obligatory education," and other equivalent or similar designations. The essential idea is the same, whatever the phraseology in which the proposition is couched; that idea is expressed in the question: What shall be done to get the school children into the schools, and to arrest the alarming increase of truancy and voluntary absenteeism? But while the verbal formula may be of little consequence, yet, aside from the ill-repute into which the other forms of statement have fallen, and the unthinking hostility which they seem to have needlessly invited, they do not, it seems to me, express the cardinal idea involved, in the fittest and most appropriate manner. They seem, in some degree, to misplace the emphasis, laying it rather upon the children than upon parents and guardians, where I think it more properly belongs. Believing, as I do, that the greater fault lies against parents and guardians, for neglecting or refusing to send their children and wards to school, and not against the latter, for refusing to attend; and hence that the real gravamen consists in depriving children and youth of their educational rights, at a period when they can neither appreciate the loss incurred, nor obtain redress

for the wrong inflicted—holding this to be the juster view of the subject, when law-making power is invoked in behalf of these victims of neglect and wrong, I would have the statute entitled, not an act to compel the attendance of children at school, but an act to secure to children *their right* to a good common school education. . . . .

Grounds of the rights to education.—Are there, then, such rights, or is the claim a mere sentiment, a bare assumption?—a pertinent inquiry, for the affirmation that there are, is the major premise of the argument, and essential to its strength; rights and privileges that do not exist, cannot be infringed, abridged or denied. The right to the rudiments of knowledge, is a common, natural right of humanity; and, in this State, it is also a constitutional and legal right. . . . .

But I have said that, in this State, at least these rights are also guaranteed by the constitution, and established by law. The first section of the eighth article of the organic law of Illinois declares that: "The General Assembly shall provide a thorough and efficient system of free schools, whereby all the children of this State may receive a good common school education"; and this injunction of the constitution is obeyed in the forty-eighth section of the school law, which declares that boards of directors, "shall establish and keep in operation, for at least five months in each year, and longer if practicable, a sufficient number of free schools for the proper accommodation of all children in the district over the age of six and under twenty-one years, and shall secure to all such children the right and opportunity to an equal education in such free schools."

In conformity with these provisions, there is now in this State a free school system, well established, thoroughly organized, and in successful operation.

But the grave question recurs: If those who have the custody and guardianship of children, refuse or neglect to avail themselves of these munificent provisions—if they do not, or will not send them to the public schools, or otherwise cause them to be educated, what shall be done? I answer, let such parents and guardians be required by law to discharge that duty. . . . .

Parents and guardians should be enjoined, by appropriate legislation, to secure for their children and wards a good common school education—

I. *Because it is Competent for the General Assembly to pass such laws.*

II. *Because it is Necessary and Expedient.*

If these two propositions can be established, the doctrine of legislative interposition to arrest the evils of non-attendance and truancy, and to secure to all the youth of the State the rights and benefits of education, will also be established. . . . .

The idea of free schools, established and supported by the State, was born of the political sagacity, far-reaching wisdom and sanctified common sense of the New England Fathers, who builded their moral, social and political institutions upon foundations as enduring as the rocks of their own sea-girt colonies. . . . .

Multitudes who ardently, and even vehemently, defend and support free schools, and favor the imposition of every tax necessary to their maintenance in the most liberal and efficient manner, are unaccountably disturbed at the idea of any legal provisions to secure attendance. The attitude and opinions of these good men may be thus epitomized:

"Proclaim the gospel of universal education by free public schools," they say: "it is the only gospel of political safety. Ballots for all, without knowledge for all, is the precipitous road to anarchy or despotism. Establish your school systems, with all their intricate and nicely adjusted machinery, and their tens of thousands of school officers and fiduciary agents. . . . . Tax, with a free hand, that nothing be wanting, for the people *must be educated.* If any refuse to pay, bring down upon them the strong arm, and make them pay; enforce the law, seize and sell their goods and property, and extort the tax, for the youth of this nation must be educated. Do all these things without hesitation or fear; replenish and fill your school treasuries, and keep them full, in city, town and country. Spare no pains, omit no duty, exercise every power conferred by law, for the very life of the Republic depends upon the education of all the people. *But,* let there be *no compulsion* in the matter of *attendance!* Any legislation on that subject would be un-American, anti-republican, arbitrary, despotic, odious. Every parent must be left at perfect liberty to avail himself of these princely provisions, or not, and to educate his child, or leave it in ignorance, as he may elect; and where

there is no parental control, the right of the child to go to school or stay away, must on no account be infringed or abridged. These are matters with which the government, even though that government be but the embodiment and utterance of the popular will, has no business to meddle. Reserved and sacred precincts are these, into which no impertinent school law may presume to intrude. The very idea of pressure in this direction is offensive, and repugnant to the spirit of our institutions."

"Moreover," say they, "such legislation will do no good; it will not reach the evil—the spirits of absenteeism and truancy cannot be so exorcised. It will merely offend, and alienate, without materially adding to the muster-rolls of the schools. And besides, it is vain to pass laws in advance of public sentiment; they will be an irritation and offence, while practically remaining a dead letter. And again, if parents may be compelled to educate their children as the State prescribes, in things secular and temporal, they may also in things religious and spiritual, and thus the inviolable realm of conscience may be invaded. Only make the schools themselves what they should be, and the maximum attendance will be attained without legislation. In every view, therefore, the attempt to reach the question of attendance in this way, is impolitic and unnecessary, and would prove inoperative and mischievous." . . . .

Popular misapprehensions of the subject.—It is not proposed to drag children to school, *vi et armis*, as some seem to imagine. . . . . The proposed legal incentives to attendance, unfortunately *called* compulsion, belong to the simplest and most familiar category of legislative provisions. . . . . To illustrate, I quote the material sections of a bill, on this subject, introduced into our legislature last winter:

"Section 1. *Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly.* That every person having under his control a child between the ages of eight and fourteen years, shall annually, during the continuance of his control, send such child to some public school in the school district in which he resides, at least twelve weeks, if the public school of such district so long continues, six weeks of which time shall be consecutive; and for every neglect of such duty the party offending shall forfeit to the use of such school district a sum not exceeding twenty dollars.

"2. The penalty provided for in section one shall not be imposed in cases where it appears, upon the inquiry of the directors of any school district, or upon trial of any prosecution, that the party so neglecting was not able, by reason of poverty, to send such child to school, or to furnish him or her with the necessary clothing and books, or that such child has been kept in any other school for said period of time, or has already acquired the branches of learning taught in the public schools, or that his or her bodily or mental condition has been such as to prevent his or her attendance at school, or application to study for the period required."

. . . . It serves well the purpose of indicating the general *character* of the legal *pressure* which it is proposed to bring to bear upon parents and guardians to induce them to educate their children; and of dispelling the ridiculous fancies entertained by the ignorant, and fostered by some who ought to know better, respecting the provisions and appliances of a compulsory school law. Laws in relation to school attendance, popularly called compulsory, are now in force in the States of Michigan, New Hampshire and Connecticut, and in none of them is the compulsion, the force, anything different from, or more alarming than, that prescribed in the bill from which I have quoted. . . . .

It is said that such laws cannot be enforced; that public sentiment is against them. . . . .

But, it is said, when public opinion is thus prepared for compulsory laws, there will be no need of them; since, by the very conditions supposed, the pressure of public sentiment will then of itself be sufficient to suppress absenteeism. Then, what need of legislation on any subject, that has the general approval? . . . . There can be no reasonable doubt that the effect of laws to secure attendance at school would be substantially the same as the effect of tax laws and of other general laws—securing obedience from a like proportion of those who would not otherwise act. . . . .

Finally, the expediency and present necessity of legislative interposition to shield the children of the State from the dangers and the wrong of ignorance, may be urged with unanswerable force from the statistics of absenteeism, truancy and illiteracy in this country. It is an incontrovertible fact that the voluntary plan is but partially

successful. The proof is as overwhelming, as it is alarming. The evidence is comprehensive and cumulative. It pours in from every State and territory, and from all the chief cities of the republic. The reports of State and city superintendents, and of the National Commissioner of Education, are burdened with the sad details. The number of absentees and truants in our chief commercial metropolis was reported, eight years ago, as a mighty army, 100,000 strong, and subsequent reports show little comparative improvement. Uncounted thousands of vagrant, lawless children prowl the streets, and roam through the purlieus of all our great cities, becoming precocious in wickedness, and going down with frightful precipitation to the nethermost abysses of vice, pollution and shame. Taking all the States from which reports are at hand, and the number who are even enrolled, in any given year, averages less than half the total school-going population, while the average daily attendance is less than one-fifth of that population.

But the fact that has most to do with the present inquiry is, that a comparison of the statistics of the last decade shows but slight *improvement* in the ratio of attendants to non-attendants, taking all the States, territories and cities into the account; while in many the change has even been for the worse—disproving the view that the evil is steadily abating, and that with better teachers, better methods and better schools, it will continue to decrease till the minimum is practically reached, without the intervention of law. For in no preceding ten years of our common school history has progress in the science and methods of teaching, and in whatsoever makes school inviting and effective, been so marked and rapid. . . . .

It is supposed by some that legislative interposition to oblige parents to secure to their children the rudiments of a good common school education, is inhibited by the provisions of the State constitution, being, especially, contrary to the rights and immunities granted in the Bill of Rights; and this view is supposed to be favored, if not established, by the decision rendered in the case entitled, "The People of the State of Illinois, *ex. rel.* Michael O'Connell, *vs.* Robert Turner, Superintendent of the Reform School of the City of Chicago." LV Ills., 280.

The gist of the very clear and forcible opinion of the court in that case, is as follows:

"The bill of rights declares that 'all men are by nature free and independent, and have certain inherent and inalienable rights—among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' This language is not restrictive; it is broad and comprehensive, and declares a grand truth, that 'all men,' all people everywhere, have the inherent and inalienable right to liberty. Shall we say to the children of the State, you shall not enjoy this right—a right independent of all human laws and regulations? It is declared in the constitution; is higher than constitution and law, and should be held forever sacred.

"Even criminals can not be convicted and imprisoned without the process of law—without a regular trial, according to the course of the common law. Why should minors be imprisoned for misfortune? Destitution of proper parental care, ignorance, idleness and vice, are misfortunes, not crimes. In all criminal prosecutions against minors, for grave and heinous offenses, they have the right to demand the nature and cause of the accusation, and a speedy public trial by an impartial jury. All this must precede the final commitment to prison. Why should children, only guilty of misfortune, be deprived of liberty without 'due process of law'?

"It can not be said that in this case there is no imprisonment. This boy is deprived of a father's care; bereft of home influences; has no freedom of action; made subject to the will of others, and thus feels that he is a slave. Nothing could more contribute to paralyze the youthful energies, crush all noble aspirations, and unfit him for the duties of manhood. Other means of a milder character; other influences of a more kindly nature; other laws less in restraint of liberty, would better accomplish the reformation of the depraved, and infringe less upon inalienable rights." . . . .

But at what point, or in what way, does that doctrine as stated in the opinion, or any of its legitimate consequences, touch or affect the proposition that the legislative department may and should interpose to secure to every child the blessings of education? We do not propose the *imprisonment* of children "between the ages of six and sixteen years," or of any other ages, for any period of time,

great or small. We do not allege that ignorance is a *crime* on the part of the *child*, (except when caused by its own willful, incorrigible viciousness and truancy), but a misfortune, as held by the court, deserving pity and sympathy—not a prison. We put it the other way; holding that education is a natural and inalienable right of every child—"a right independent of all human laws and regulations; higher than constitution and law; and that it should be held forever sacred"; and hence, that willfully, obstinately and needlessly to deprive a child of that right is a *crime* on the part of the *parent*, of which the legislative department may properly take notice. . . . .

Recapitulation.—I think it has been shown that the legislative department may properly intervene to prevent those who have the control of children, from compelling or permitting such children to grow up in ignorance; that such intervention is not an abuse of powers conferred, not an unwarrantable assumption of powers not granted; that it is no improper invasion of personal liberty, nor of the authority and rights of parents, since it merely enforces the performance of parental duty, which can not be regarded as an infraction of rights; that it is not inconsistent with rational freedom of conscience; that it puts the right of the child to be educated, above the right of the parent to keep it in ignorance; that it protects the many, who do educate their children, against the counteracting influence of the few, who will not; that it shields the innocent from cruel wrong, since starving the mind is worse than abusing the body; that it is grounded upon the belief that to bring up children in ignorance, willfully and without cause, is a crime, and should be treated as such; that such conduct on the part of those having the control of children, being a fruitful source of criminality, should be under the ban of legal condemnation, and the restraint of legal punishment; that the allegations as to the incompatibility of such laws with the nature and spirit of our political system, are unfounded, as also are the apprehensions concerning the assumed harshness and severity of their enforcement; . . . . that the exclusively voluntary policy has been, and is, but partially successful, while the accelerated influx of foreigners renders the adoption of new measures of education, without delay, a grave political necessity; that the proposed legislative intervention is but an affirmance of the irrefutable truth, that

if it is right to tax all for the education of all, then it is equally right to see that all are educated; that it is in the line of a general human right, and of a fundamental right of children, and is compulsory only as that right must be protected against any and all infringements; that it is required, to fully utilize the vast resources already devoted to public education, and to prevent enormous and increasing waste of money, property and effort.

APPENDIX II

EXTRACTS FROM PUBLICATIONS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION RELATING TO THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION PROBLEM IN CHICAGO

Extracts from: (1) Report of Superintendent of Schools, Chicago, 1856: *Uneducated Children of Chicago;* (2) *ibid.*, 1857: *The Evil of Irregular Attendance;* (3) *ibid.*, 1864-65: *Truancy—Its Extent and Causes;* (4) Thirty-fourth Annual Report, The Board of Education, Chicago, 1887-88: *Idle Boys upon the Streets.*

(1) *Uneducated Children of Chicago (Extract from the Third Annual Report of Superintendent of Public Schools of Chicago for the Year 1856, pp. 4–11)*

While we may congratulate ourselves upon the liberal provision made by our city for the education of her children, and I trust also upon the present healthy condition of the schools, we cannot conceal the fact that a large number of children are growing up in our midst, without ever availing themselves of the means provided for their instruction. Most of this class of children are constant and punctual in their attendance upon the various schools of poverty and crime; and though never found within the walls of a school house, it is to be feared their education will prove the most expensive that is furnished to any class of our children.

It has seemed to me a matter of importance, at this period in the history of the schools, to ascertain as nearly as possible the number of children in our midst of suitable age to attend school, who are entirely destitute of school instruction. It appears from the recent census of the city, that the number of children in Chicago between the ages of five and fifteen years, is about 17,100. I take the period between five and fifteen years, because these are generally regarded as the limits of the school age, though many pupils remain in school till the age of eighteen or twenty. Our problem, then, is to account

for the school instruction of these 17,100 children who are of suitable age to attend school.

The whole number of pupils in attendance upon the public schools of the city at any time during the year 1856, after deducting those over fifteen, was 8,306. This number taken from 17,100 leaves 8,794 still to be accounted for.

The census of the city affords no means of ascertaining the number of pupils instructed in the private schools; but as it is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory solution of our question without this knowledge, I have taken measures to secure a thorough canvass of the city, for the purpose of obtaining it. The result shows that there are at the present time fifty-six private schools of various grades in the city, including the Industrial Schools and the Orphan Asylum, with an aggregate attendance of 3,850 between the ages of five and fifteen. To find the whole number attending the private schools during the year, we must add to the number now enrolled, as nearly as can be ascertained, about 550, making in all 4,400. Taking this number from 8,794, we have yet remaining 4,394 children between five and fifteen, that have not during the year been found a single day in any school of the city, either public or private.

In settling the question, how many children are habitually absent from the schools who ought to be found in them, we must make some further reduction of this number. There are a few cases in which provision is made by parents for the instruction of their children at home. There is also a small number of children that are either physically or mentally incapacitated to attend school. Perhaps some allowance should be made for those who have obtained what may be regarded a respectable education, and left school before reaching the age of fifteen. It would probably be a high estimate to put the number embraced in all these classes at 1,000. No one would think of putting it higher than 1,394. But this number taken from 4,394, leaves at least 3,000 children in our city who are utterly destitute of school instruction or any equivalent for it.

This is no theoretical speculation. The facts I have adduced have been collected and revised with the utmost care. I leave out of account the fact that hundreds of those whose names are enrolled as members of the schools, attend less than a single month in the

year, while hundreds of others are so irregular in their attendance that they can hardly be said to be benefited at all by the instruction they receive. Pupils embraced in these classes are ranked the same in my estimates as those who are punctual and regular in their attendance through the year. I would gladly present a different picture, but the facts will not possibly admit of it. The truth is demonstrable, that not less than 3,000 children in our city are destitute of all proper instruction during the period, which is to decide their future character and influence as citizens of a free Republic. This number is greater than the average attendance of the public schools during any month in the year!

The Superintendent of Public Schools in the city of Boston,[1] in a recent report, arrived at the very gratifying conclusion, "that there are not more, on an average, than 500 absentees from school, who deserve to be blamed for non-attendance." If Chicago compares unfavorably in this respect with some of the older cities, the difference is not to be ascribed to any lack of interest in the cause of public instruction, or reluctance to provide facilities for the improvement of the schools. The causes of this difference are mostly those, which are incident to the changing character and rapid increase of our population. It is true that the crowded condition of the public schools has had the effect to prevent a considerable number from entering them; but so rapid is the growth of the city, that rooms, which afford liberal accommodations for a school, when a new house is put under contract, become excessively crowded during the few months required for its erection. The distance of many families from any public school, is another serious obstacle to the attendance of children, especially those living in remote parts of the city.

But, while we may find in our peculiar circumstances an explanation of the causes which have led to this deplorable condition of so large a number of children, it would be suicidal for us to close our

[1] The President of the Board of Education in New York, in his recent inaugural address, estimates the number of children in that city who are habitually absent from school at more than 20,000. In Cincinnati there are about 41,000 children of suitable age to attend school, of whom it is estimated that more than 8,000 are never found in the schools.

eyes to the magnitude of the evil and the fearful relation it bears to the future character and destiny of our city.

If it be asked, what can be done to reduce the number of absentees from the schools, the first and most natural step to be taken, is to furnish the community with information in respect to the nature and extent of the evil that exists, and this is the main object which I have had in view, in presenting the foregoing facts. If the citizens of Chicago could be brought fully to realize that these 3,000 children, growing up in ignorance, and many of them in want and crime, are a dangerous element in our social compact, a thousand almost imperceptible influences would soon be brought to bear upon them, and more than a thousand children, now found in the streets or in haunts of vice, would soon be found in the public schools. The ingenuity of philanthropists would be tasked to devise means, by which this poisonous stream might be purified, before its deadly waters are mingled in the full, strong current of adult life.

By increasing the number of schools so as to furnish an adequate number of teachers, and a proper amount of room, and thus render the schools more efficient and attractive, we shall do much to increase the number in attendance. But when all general measures have been tried, as far as they can be brought to bear upon the case, it is to be feared that a large class of children will still be left to grow up in ignorance, unless some special means are adopted to bring them under the influence of school instruction.

(2) *The Evil of Irregular Attendance (Fourth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools of Chicago, 1857, pp. 42–49)*

The evil of irregular attendance is one that has long engaged the attention of the Board of Education, and one that has hitherto baffled all the efforts that have been made for its removal. It is now universally regarded as the most dangerous evil that exists in connection with the free school system.

Near the close of 1857, the Board adopted the following rule, which took effect on the first of January, 1858:

"Any scholar who shall be absent six half days in four consecutive weeks, without an excuse from the parent or guardian, given

either in person or by written note, satisfying the teacher that the absences were caused by his own sickness or by sickness in the family, shall forfeit his seat in the school; and the teacher shall forthwith notify the parent and the Superintendent that the pupil is suspended. No pupil thus suspended shall be restored to school, till he has given satisfactory assurance of punctuality in the future and obtained permission from the Superintendent to return."

The propriety or impropriety of adopting such a rule, involves grave questions, which lie at the very foundation of our system of free schools.

That education should be free and universal, is now the prevailing sentiment of this nation. The primary basis on which the doctrine of free schools rests, is the safety of the State. Uneducated men and women are regarded as a dangerous element in a free Republic. There are, however, many who still look with distrust upon schools entirely free, and the number would be found to be much larger than it appears, if it were not for the odium of entertaining sentiments that are unpopular with the masses. Even among the ablest and most devoted friends of popular education, there are not wanting those who regard it as unwise to make our schools entirely free to children whose parents are able to contribute to their support. They believe that opportunities which cost nothing can never be fully appreciated, and that our schools can never rise to the highest order of excellence while those who enjoy their benefits do not put forth any direct effort to aid in sustaining them. The Hon. Henry Barnard, of Connecticut, one of the ablest and most devoted friends of education in the country, has long entertained this view of the subject. During the last year, an animated discussion on this question took place on New England ground, between Mr. Barnard and the Hon. George S. Boutwell, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

The friends of free schools have much to fear from the arguments that are based upon the irregular attendance of scholars, and the consequent waste of so large a portion of the funds that are provided for the support of the schools. If this waste was as apparent as it is real, a remedy in some form would long since have been demanded.

Let us take, for illustration, our own city. The average number of absences from all the Grammar and Primary Schools during the year, was more than one-fifth of the average number belonging to the schools. But if one-fifth of the children are always absent, there is an absolute loss of one-fifth of the expense of sustaining the schools, for it is obviously much easier to instruct any number of pupils who are punctual, than the same number that are habitually irregular in their attendance. The derangement of classes and the time required to bring up lost lessons, are always more than an equivalent for the time saved by any reduction of numbers that may be occasioned by absences. Here, then, is a positive loss to the city of more than $12,000 during the year 1857. In two years, this loss amounts to a sum sufficient to build one of our first class school houses.

But it is not the waste of money alone, that is sapping the foundations of our free school system. One of the principal objects in making the schools free and common to all classes, is to remove the danger of having an uneducated and vicious class of persons constantly growing up, to prey upon society. This object is of course in a great degree lost, if those whom the schools are desired to raise from vagrancy and ignorance, are to regard them with indifference and neglect.

In this city, as in others, there is a class of parents who seem to regard the public schools as convenient places, where they may send their children on days when they happen to have nothing else for them to do. The consequence is, that many children have been in the habit of attending school only one or two days in the week—in some instances not more than two or three days in a month; often enough to retard the progress of the class with which they were connected, but not often enough to derive any substantial benefit themselves.

But there is another evil connected with the irregular attendance of scholars, that is seriously affecting the interests of free schools. The absence of a portion of a class, retards the progress of all the rest. It is safe to say that in many of the classes in our schools, the advancement has not been more than two-thirds or three-fourths as great as it would have been if the pupils had been punctual in their attend-

ance. If all the members of a class were equally irregular, each pupil would suffer his own share of this loss. But the records of the schools show that more than one-half of the absences belong to less than one-fifth of the scholars. Here, then, is a most glaring injustice. Parents sometimes claim that they have a right to keep their children from school when they please, without stopping to consider that other parents, whose children are uniformly punctual, have also a right to expect that they will not be kept back in their classes by those who are habitually irregular.

Heretofore this right of the few to hinder the progress of the many, has been yielded; while the right of the many to advance without these impediments, has been disregarded. A large portion of the children that are taken from the public schools and placed under private instruction, are transferred from this cause; while many of the parents whose children still remain, have an abiding feeling that their rights are disregarded for the gratification of those who are indifferent to the education of their own children.

Every one at all conversant with our schools, is aware that most of the absences that occur, are occasioned by the carelessness and neglect of parents, and not by any real necessity.

If this evil is to continue unchecked, our schools can never reach a high standard of excellence, and many parents will contrive to send their children to private schools, rather than submit to the annoyance of having them classed with those who have no ambition to improve, and who are not willing to put forth the necessary effort to establish habits of punctuality.

On the other hand, if the rights of all shall be equally regarded, and an ordinary degree of regularity in attendance upon the schools shall be made a condition of membership, then may we expect that our schools will continue to advance, and become more and more worthy of the confidence of all classes in the community.

I have taken the liberty to present these views, because it is vain for us to close our eyes against evils that threaten the stability of our noble system of public instruction. I believe that this system is destined to triumph, and that, in the future history of the country, the common schools will be entirely free. But of nothing do I feel more fully assured than this, that if the free school system is finally

to prevail, it must be by reducing it to a rigidly economical basis, and by treating the rights of all with equal consideration.

It was with this view of the case, that the Board of Education adopted the rule requiring those who enter the public schools of this city, to attend with some degree of regularity. The rule has already accomplished twice as much in improving the standard of punctuality in our schools, as all previous agencies combined.

So far as I can learn, the rule has given general satisfaction. More than a hundred different parents have already applied in person to have their children restored to the seats that had been forfeited by irregular attendance; but I can recollect only a single instance in which a parent has made any special complaint of the rule itself, while in a large majority of cases, those whom I have seen have expressed themselves gratified with its adoption.

It is not the design of the rule to exclude from the schools any children whose parents put forth sufficient effort to secure an ordinary degree of punctuality; and even when a seat has been forfeited, the pupil is not necessarily deprived of the privileges of the school, except for a single day.

One of the most important advantages of the rule, is the opportunity it affords the Superintendent to confer with parents in regard to the interests of their children and of the schools.

Similar rules have already been adopted in St. Louis, Dubuque, Cincinnati, Hartford, New Haven, Worcester, and other cities; embracing the principle that habitual irregularity of attendance is a sufficient cause for depriving a pupil of his seat in school. . . . .

(3) *Truancy—Its Extent and Causes (Extract from Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of Chicago, 1864-65, pp. 19-38)*

Let our attention be turned, a moment, to the facts concerning those who are enrolled upon our School Records. We shall find the average number belonging, during any one month, about 90 per cent. of the whole number enrolled, and the average daily attendance only 90 per cent. of the average number belonging to the schools. From this we learn, first, that about 10 per cent. of the membership of our schools is changed each month; and, second, that 10 per cent.

of the number belonging to the schools are absent every day. Could our schools all be visited, upon a day of average weather, only 13,500 of the 15,000 acutally belonging there, would be seen. Where are the remaining 1,500? Some are sick, and others are feigning sickness; some are watching by the sickbed of some other member of the family; some are supplying the places of others, whom necessity has sent from home; some are entertaining friends; some are preparing to entertain expected visitors, or to be entertained by inviting hosts; some are idly dozing away time under the plea of resting from some unusual physical exertion, or are recovering from the fatigue attendant upon some unnecessary conviviality; some are moping about in their effort to execute an errand, trumped up as an excuse for absence; many are endeavoring to render earnestly proffered assistance to indulgent parents, who accept offers of help when it is not needed, rather than cross the wishes of their children; many are roaming the streets in search of enjoyment not found in books; while some are skulking about, shunning both parent and teacher, while they play truant. To all these forms of excuse, the children are agreed. But the whole truth is not yet told. Many who would gladly be in their places, are absent because of their parents' indifference or carelessness. Avarice, too, has had its influence in depriving the school room of happy faces, willing minds, and joyous hearts. The little earnings of the child on the one hand, and on the other hand the money saved, that would otherwise have gone to the purchase of books and necessary clothing to make the child comfortable at school, have had a more powerful influence through the father's pocket, than the earnest look and beseeching tone of the little child thirsting for knowledge, combined with the father's conviction of duty in regard to the mental and moral cultivation of his offspring. Many a child has been sacrificed, mentally and morally, as well as physically, to the pecuniary interest of the parent. Every effort should be made to secure the city against the inroads which avarice and carelessness are thus making upon her prosperity.

Were the evil of irregular attendance confined to any individuals, constituting 10 per cent. of the number belonging in school, it could be much more easily borne, and would prove less disastrous; but to make up the ten absentees each day, more than fifty out of each

hundred are drawn upon during the month, and the fifty will be found more or less irregular, so that a majority of each school is, in reality, irregular in its attendance. To-day, ten are absent; to-morrow, five will return, and their places will be supplied by five who are present to-day, and upon some other day the ten of to-day will be found in their seats, but the seats of ten others will be vacant. Thus the school changes from day to day, classes are kept back on account of the slow progress of the irregular, and if it be urged that the majority should control the progress of the class, it will be found upon inquiry that the majority is irregular, and so does control.

. . . . . .

Earnest and faithful as the teacher may be, he will yet fail to reach many cases of truancy. The parents' absence from home at the most important part of the day, the unwillingness of other parents to take any interest in the punctual attendance of their child; and the utter refusal of others, who encourage truancy in their children, to aid the teacher in his work, enforce the necessity of some other agency than those established by the Board of Education, and faithfully executed by willing teachers. . . . .

The necessity of some such system becomes every day more apparent in this city. The city owes it to herself as an act of self-preservation. I shall be met with the objection that the city has no right to compel the attendance of any children upon her public schools. For the sake of argument, admit this to be true, and for a moment let us examine whether there is anything compulsory in the plan proposed. It is not expected that all children will attend the public schools; they are left at liberty to attend or not as they may see fit. The Truant Officer is expected to use all his *persuasive power* to induce attendance upon some school of those who are growing up without any instruction or without occupation. Further than this I do not ask that his power shall for the present extend. But with truants from schools to which they properly belong, the case is different. They have been placed at school with a full understanding that they must submit to all reasonable rules and regulations. Is any regulation more reasonable than the one which demands regular attendance upon school? Is any rule more reasonable than the one which requires correct deportment on the part of all pupils? Would

not a parent have just reason to complain of any school which neglected these very important matters? Can a proper care for the execution of these rules be considered at all compulsory in its nature? Does not every candid parent consent to such a discipline of his child? Would any proper means to secure good habits be considered compulsory? Would not every parent rather compel the observance of rules so wise and salutary?

So far as the arrest and sentence of the offender is concerned, is it any more compulsory than the law which already exists, and under which the same offender is liable to arrest and sentence at least so soon as he shall have reached the point of crime toward which his habits of truancy are most surely leading him? . . . .

The necessity of some system to check truancy is enforced by the following considerations:

Truants are rapidly learning the lessons of the street: lessons at war with the vital interests of the people, a school in which pupils make rapid progress in disobedience to parents, prevarication, falsehood, obscenity, profanity, lewdness, intemperance, petty thieving, larceny, burglary, robbery and murder, whose graduates become a prey upon the citizen, and a constant tax upon his pocket. Out of nearly 2,800 criminals confined in the State of New York during a period of ten years, it was found that less than 250 had ever been regular attendants upon any school.

Again, the cost of the system will be less to the city than the care of the criminals added to the list by its absence.

Still further, the city owes a debt to those poor parents, who are necessarily away from their homes during the entire day, and who cannot, for that reason, prevent or correct the truant habits of their children. Such children feel sure of immunity in their truancy, because their parents cannot be found by the teacher when he seeks a reason for their absence. Many such parents have, during the past year, besought my aid in correcting the truancy of their children. Gladly as I would aid them, my lack of time forbids any such work as a Truant Officer can alone well do.

I leave this subject with the hope that such measures will be adopted by the laity as now lie within their power, and if further legislative action is needed, that early steps will be taken to secure it.

(4) *Idle Boys upon the Streets (Extract from the Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education, Chicago, 1887–88, pp. 20–23)*

Although the State has taken steps toward compulsory education, yet much remains to be done before the law can be efficiently enforced. In some cities, notably New York, there are officers with police authority whose business it is to look out for and take to school truant children found roaming about the streets during school hours; something of the sort is needed here, in order to give greater efficiency to our school system. The law, it is true, provides that parents shall be prosecuted who fail to send their children to school three months during each year. But to devolve this additional duty upon members of the Board of Education, who are already overburdened with so many of the responsibilities of the school system of this great city, practically leaves the law a dead letter. The duty of enforcing this law ought in terms to be devolved upon the agencies provided by law for police purposes or greater powers given specifically to the Board.

In my last report I referred to some of the defects in our school system, notably a want of authority, by which many of the youth of both sexes were permitted to roam idly about the streets. A proper authority to control these children, at least to the extent of compelling their attendance at either the day or the night schools, would undoubtedly be the means of their reclamation to a life of usefulness. It is believed that the Legislature would, if properly memorialized on the subject, so amend the existing law as to authorize the detention of children found upon the street during school hours, and provide for conducting them to school, with punishment for a second offense. This would do much toward breaking up those object lessons in vice, so often found where boys are collected after nightfall.

If authority existed to arrest truant children, and see that they are taken to some city school, the parents would be forced to exercise greater vigilance as to the whereabouts of their children. One of the principal excuses given by some parents for not keeping their children in school is that they are compelled by poverty to send them out to

service, to aid in their own support. This may in some instances be a fair excuse, but in a country like ours the State ought not to permit the early life of a citizen to be thus dwarfed. By the munificence of former citizens, funds have been provided for the purchase of books by the Board, to be distributed, under the direction of the Principal of the school, to pupils whose means are insufficient to purchase the necessary books for school use. And it must be that we have in our midst citizens who would of their substance provide the necessary clothing to enable all children to attend school. Is it not the manifest duty of the State to more effectually prevent the employment of children of tender years in factories, and other places, when the best interests of the community require that their education should be proceeded with? The State looks upon the child, boy or girl, only as a future citizen, in a free State, to be bound by its laws, to participate directly in the administration of its government, and by and through whom its free institutions are to be transmitted unimpaired to future generations. If, therefore, the parent is derelict in his duty and sends his child to work, instead of to school, why should not the State interfere for its own and the child's well-being? A recent writer on Popular Government, Sir Henry Maine, calls attention to the fact that in Democracies there is a growing tendency, in the individual citizen, to grow indifferent to the minute atom of sovereignty, vested in him, and to become neglectful in its exercise. This neglect, by a natural evolution, develops "the party leader" in our large centers of population. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that the rising generation shall be early and thoroughly instructed in the duties of an enlightened citizenship, and an earnest and active public spirit developed and perpetuated. The changed conditions from those which prevailed in the past generation, and the great tide of promiscuous immigration, absolutely requires the fostering of a vigilant public spirit in the individual citizen. This is impossible unless through the early proper education of the children.

APPENDIX III

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF CHILD LABOR AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION LAWS IN ILLINOIS

(1) *Extracts from the First Annual Report*[1] *of the Factory Inspectors of Illinois, 1893, pp. 8–15*

Child labor.—Among the first work of the inspectors was a careful canvass of the sewing, metal-stamping, woodworking, book-binding, box, candy, tobacco, and cigar trades, and the discharge of a large number of children under fourteen years of age.

The requirement that an age affidavit be filed in the workshop or factory, before a child is employed, has already made it a general practice on the part of employers to hand to every child applying for work an affidavit blank to be filled by the parent. Children who cannot get such blanks filled because not yet fourteen years old, apply at one shop after another until they either find some unscrupulous employer, or grow discouraged and give up the quest for work. Although some affidavits are undoubtedly false, hundreds of parents have withdrawn their children from work rather than forswear themselves.

Principally to meet the contingency of perjury, the inspectors have required health certificates of children markedly undersized, as well as of those who are diseased or deformed. . . . .

Where the child was found able to continue at work, it was granted a health certificate. In a large majority of cases, however, the examining physician endorsed upon the age affidavit the following formula:

"It is my opinion that this child is physically unfit for work at his present occupation."

The employer was then notified to discharge the child.

[1] Mrs. Florence Kelley, chief factory inspector, see *ante*, pp. 72–84, 299.

It soon transpired that some occupations were more injurious than others; sweat-shops, tobacco, cutlery and stamping works being worse, for instance, than candy-packing rooms. On the other hand, the lightest occupations are rendered injurious by long hours of work. Therefore the prohibition of work for delicate children has been rarer in factories having good sanitary conditions, and known absolutely to obey the eight-hour section of the law, than in factories concerning which there was any doubt upon this point. . . . .

The medical profession and the law.—The value of this provision of the law [i. e., the medical certificate clause], however, depends upon the intelligent co-operation of the medical profession. For if the certificates are granted merely *pro forma*, upon the representation of the employer of the child, the object of the law is nullified. The physician who grasps the situation and appreciates the humane intent of the law, will always find time to visit the factory and see under what conditions the child is working. Otherwise his certificate may be worse than valueless, and may work a positive injury to a child whom the inspectors are trying to save from an injurious occupation.

Thus a healthy child may wish to enter a cracker bakery, and unless the physician visits it, and sees the dwarfish boys slowly roasting before the ovens, in the midst of unguarded belting and shafting (a danger to health which men refuse to incur), he may be inclined to grant the certificate, and thereby deprive the child of the only safeguard to his health which the State affords him. Similar danger exists in regard to tobacco, picture-frame, box, metal-stamping and woodworking factories.

Unfortunately the law does not require that the physician shall visit the workshop or factory, and see the child at work, and certificates have in some instances been granted in a disgracefully reckless manner.

A delicate looking little girl was found at work in a badly ventilated tailor shop facing an alley, in the rear of a tenement house. The bad location and atmosphere of the shop, and the child's stooping position as she worked, led the inspector to demand a health certificate. Examination at the office revealed a bad case of rachitis and antero-posterior curvature of the spine, one shoulder an inch higher than the other, and the child decidedly below the standard

weight. Dr. Milligan endorsed upon the age affidavit: "It is my opinion that this child is physically incapable of work in any tailor shop." The employer was notified to discharge the child. A few days later she was found at work again in the same place, and the contractor produced the following "certificate," written upon the prescription blank of a physician in good and regular standing:

(Dated.) Dr. M. Meyerovitz, 179 W. 12th st., cor. Jefferson.

"This is to certify that I examined Miss Annie Cihlar, and found her in a physiological condition.

(*Signed,*) "MEYEROVITZ."

A test case was made, to ascertain the value of the medical certificate clause, and the judge decided that this certificate was void, and imposed a fine upon the employer for failure to obtain a certificate in accordance with the wording of the law. The child then went to another physician, and was given the following:

(Dated.) Dr. Frank J. Patera, 675 W. Taylor st.

CHICAGO, November 26, 1893

"*To whom it may concern:*

"This is to certify that I have this day examined Annie Cihlar, and find her, in my opinion, healthy. She is well developed for her age, muscular system in good condition, muscles are hard and solid; the lungs and heart are normal; the muscles of right side of trunk are better developed than upon the left side, which has a tendency to draw spine to that side, as a result of greater muscular activity upon that side. I cannot find no desease [*sic*] of the spine.

(*Signed,*) "F. J. PATERA, M.D."

The sweater, taught by experience, declined to re-engage this child until this certificate was approved by an inspector. The inspector of course declined to approve it. The charge made for these certificates, and others of the same sort, ranged from fifty cents to two dollars.

This experience of illiteracy and unscrupulousness on the part of physicians in good and regular standing, indicates a need of co-operation among the different functionaries of the State, for there is, so far as known to the inspectors, no public physician or body of medical men to whom children can be sent for careful examination free of charge. The gratis examinations made at this office are due, as has already been stated, solely to the generosity of Drs. Milligan

and Holmes, and to the faithful work of Dr. Holmes' students, under his direction, in making measurements, tests, etc., with no other reward than a widened knowledge of the physique of children of the wage-earning class. . . . .

Physical deterioration.—Every medical examination made in this office has been scheduled and filed, and the record formed in this manner is a truly appalling exposition of the deterioration of the rising generation of the wage-earning class. The human product of our industry is an army of toiling children undersized, rachitic, deformed, predisposed to consumption if not already tuberculous. Permanently enfeebled by the labor imposed upon them during the critical years of development, these children will inevitably fail in the early years of manhood and womanhood. They are now a long way on the road to become suffering burdens upon society, lifelong victims of the poverty of their childhood and the greed which denies children the sacred right of school life and healthful leisure.

Illiteracy.—The enforcement of Section Four of the law brings to light a deplorable amount of illiteracy among working children. Thus, in the first case prosecuted, that against Gustav Ravitz for employing a girl under fourteen years of age in his tailor shop, it was shown in court that this child had been brought thirteen years before to Chicago from Poland, yet she could not read or write in any language, nor speak English. Neither she nor her mother knew the year of the child's birth, and an interpreter was required in speaking with them both.

A little girl thirteen years of age found at 120 West Taylor street (Baumgarten's knee-pants shop), sewing on buttons in the bedroom of the sweater's family, was discharged. She is a Russian Jewess three years in this country, and does not know her letters. She was taken bodily to the Jewish Training School and entered as a pupil.

Greek, Italian, Bohemian, Polish and Russian children are constantly encountered who speak no English, hundreds of whom cannot read nor write in any language. Children who cannot spell their name or the name of the street in which they live are found at work every day by the deputies.

Where these children are under fourteen years of age, they are turned over to the compulsory attendance officer of the board of education, but for those over the age of fourteen the state prescribes no educational requirement, and unless they look deformed, undersized, or diseased, the inspectors have no ground upon which to withdraw them from their life of premature toil. And in no case can we insist upon rudimentary education for them.

In this respect the Illinois law is far from abreast with the laws of Massachusetts and New York. In Massachusetts every child must attend some school throughout the period during which the public schools are in session until fourteen years of age. . . . . New York empowers her inspectors to order peremptorily the discharge of any child under sixteen years of age who cannot read and write simple sentences in the English language. Such a clause as this last one would cause the transfer of many hundreds of Illinois children from the factory to the schoolroom.

Instability.—Nor do the children who are deprived of school life receive at work any technical training which might in part compensate for their loss. On the contrary, it has been most forcibly shown that the reverse is the case by Assistant Inspector Stevens, of this staff, in a valuable paper read before the International Convention of Factory Inspectors. Mrs. Stevens says:

"A surprising thing developed by the use of the affidavits is the migratory method pursued by the employed children. Our very thorough and complete system of handling the registers, records and affidavits, enables us to trace a child changing its place of work, and also to note the number of changes in any one place. I cite one instance typical of all: On August 22, I inspected a candy factory, where I found eighty children under 16. For sixty-three of these affidavits had been filed, of which I found forty-three correct and twenty worthless because improperly made out. The forty-three correct affidavits were stamped, seventeen children unprovided with affidavits were sent home, and the twenty defective affidavits were returned to the children, who were given until the next day to get them right. On September 8, another inspector visited this factory and found seventy-one children at work with sixty-five affidavits awaiting inspection. Only one of these bore the stamp of my pre-

vious inspection, two weeks before. The seventy children were a new lot, and all but one of the children I had found in this place had taken their affidavits and flitted off to other work. In the same factory on September 11—only three days later, and one of those a Sunday—a third inspector found 119 children, and, of course, new records and an almost total change in the register were again necessary.

"From such experiences as these we are led to hope that the trouble employers will have over the affidavits, the posting of new records, the changing of registers, will lead them to the employment of older help. Indeed, this candy manufacturer is already seeking girls over 16.

"This drifting about of children at work indicates a most demoralized and demoralizing condition, which should be carefully studied by those who argue in favor of giving children employment. They talk with insufficient knowledge who say it is an advantage to boys and girls to have 'steady occupation,' a 'chance to learn a trade.' . . . . We may well ask what can be learned by a boy or girl who is to-day in one factory of one kind and to-morrow in another factory of another kind; one week wrapping caramels and the next week gilding picture frames? . . . . What the child does learn is instability, unthrift, trifling with opportunity. . . . . It is a matter of the rarest occurrence to find a set of children who have been working together two months in any factory."

(2) *Extracts from the Second Annual Report of the Factory Inspectors of Illinois, 1894, pp. 12–21*

Children under 14 years of age.—Although the law prohibits absolutely the employment of any child under 14 years of age in manufacture, yet the children under 14 years can never be wholly kept out of the factories and workshops until they are kept in school. At present the school attendance law is almost useless, at least in Chicago, where the largest number of children have been found at work. Although the Chicago Board of Education employs attendance agents, yet children leave school to sell papers; to carry cash in stores and telegrams and messages in streets; to peddle, black boots, "tend the baby," or merely to idle about. Unruly children

are expelled from school to suit the convenience of teachers. Principals of schools have sent to the inspectors children 11 years old, with the written request that permits be granted to enable the children to go to work (in violation of the factory law) because in each case the child is "incorrigible." As no factory can be a better place for a child 11 years old than a reasonably good school, this request voices the desire of the Principal to be relieved of the trouble of the child. For all these various reasons, and perhaps also because of the want of sufficient school accommodations, children are freed from school attendance at such a rate that the last school census, 1894, shows 6,887 children between the ages of 7 and 14 years, in Chicago alone, who attend no school.

Of these thousands, hundreds are seeking work in shops and factories, and when they find work and the laws of the state are thereby violated, the task of prosecution, which should fall in part at least on the Board of Education of Chicago, devolves upon the State Factory Inspectors alone.

Co-operation with the Chicago Board of Education.—In three months, September, October and November this department forwarded to the compulsory attendance department of the Chicago Board of Education, the names and addresses of 76 children under 14 years of age who were found by inspectors during these months at work, in violation of Section 4 of the Factory and Workshop law; also the names and addresses of 27 other children who, in these three months, applied at the office for permission to go to work in violation of the law, and to whom we refused age affidavits because they were not yet 14 years old.

These 103 children under 14 years of age, found at work or seeking work since the present school year began, have all been seen and talked with by one or more inspectors of this department, and we therefore speak with knowledge of each case, when we say that none of these children has yet mastered the teachings of a primary school; a large number cannot yet write their own names; and some of them cannot yet speak the English language.

As to the environment in which the 76 children were found working, 30 were in sweat shops, six in cigar factories and 15 at the stock yards; leaving only 25 of the 76 in occupations relatively harmless.

To rescue in three months 51 children under 14 years of age from nicotine poisoning, from the miasma of the stock yards, and from the horrible conditions of the sweat shops is to accomplish something worth doing,—if we could be certain that the rescue would result in added school life and opportunities for normal growth and development for the children. Unfortunately our experience has convinced us that we may find the child discharged today at work tomorrow, or next week, in some other shop or factory.

The State Inspectors having obtained the conviction of 25 employers upon 33 charges of having in their factories or workshops children under 14 years of age, while no parent has been prosecuted under the school laws, it is manifest that parents are going unpunished who share the responsibility for their children's unlawful employment.

The Board of Education has kindly furnished us a report of the disposition made of such of the children reported by us as received the attention of its attendance agents during September and October. This report shows that the officers placed in school 31 children out of 64 investigated by them; a little less than one-half. Upon the remaining 33 cases the report shows that several children were not found by the attendance agents; a few were given permits to work in stores; some were dropped with the remark that the children were "incorrigible"; and in 15 cases the mere statement of the parent that the child was over 14 was received by the compulsory department as sufficient reason for dropping the case, although in each such case the parent declined, in dealing with us, to make affidavit to show the child to be more than 14 years old.

Nullification of Section 4.—The humane intent of the first clause of Section 4 of the workshop and factory law is obvious: that the child under 14 years is to be safeguarded by the State against employment injurious to it. This intent is nullified if the child is not kept in school, but drifts from one workshop into another, or from the factories into the streets.

We therefore recommend that the legislature make the prosecution of derelict parents not as it now is, merely discretionary with the local school boards, but mandatory upon them; as the prosecution of manufacturers is made mandatory upon the factory inspectors by Section 9 of the factory law.

Working children not yet protected by the law.—Among the 6,887 children shown by the Chicago school census of 1894 to be out of school between the ages of 7 and 14, there is a horde of little peddlers of fruit, vegetables and other wares. These children learn no trade and form only habits of roaming the street, irresponsible and lawless. When children are expelled from school at 11 years of age, and prohibited from working in factories until 14, they are apt to fall into this class. They could be reached by requiring every peddler or vendor under 16 years of age to obtain a license from the State Factory Inspector, and prohibiting all such work for children under the age of 14 years, and for illiterate children under 16 years.

One evasion of the child labor clauses.—One difficulty encountered in the work of inspection seems to require more than passing mention. It often happens that an inspector, on entering a cigar shop or sweat shop, sees a boy or girl drop into a chair, put on a cap or shawl, or pose as a visitor only, a pretense steadfastly supported by the "boss," and the other employes in the room. The child's hands may be stained with nicotine, or with the fluff of the half-made garment, and the inspector may see every indication that the work before the child was in its hands when the door of the shop was opened; but the story of the "visit" is told and maintained in the face of all indications to the contrary. Obviously, any court must hesitate to convict the employer of such a child on the unsupported testimony of the inspector, where the "boss," the child and the other employes of the shop appear in court to contradict the inspector. Again, the employer will insist that a child is a member of his family, or the child of a neighbor or a relative, and is not an employe; or that the child is waiting about to find an errand to do for some one in the place. An example of this is afforded by the report of two inspectors who visited a bottling place and found, in the room where the work was being carried on, three boys under 14 years of age. They were told that the boys "just waited around in the hope of getting an errand to do, and a glass of beer for doing it."

To enforce the law as it now stands in places where such subterfuges as these are resorted to, is difficult always, and sometimes impossible. We, therefore, recommend that the child labor clauses of the law be so amended that the presence of a child in any workshop

or factory shall constitute conclusive evidence that it is employed therein.

Children in mercantile establishments.—Many of the more orderly and intelligent of the 6,887 Chicago children under 14 years, who are out of school, and who are kept out of factories and workshops by the law, find work in stores or as telegraph and messenger boys. The duty of extending to these children the same degree of protection now afforded by the law to the children in factories and workshops should not need urging. In Massachusetts and Pennsylvania all the provisions of the factory law apply to mercantile establishments.

Should Illinois protect such children less? Is it not a discrimination both injurious and anomalous, which leaves the little cash girl without the safeguards afforded to her sister in the factory or workshop? The situation is illustrated by the Christmas experience of one of their number. A little girl, 13 years of age, saw, in an evening paper of December 23d last, an advertisement for six girls to work in one of the best known candy stores; candidates to apply at seven o'clock the next morning at a branch store, one and one-half miles from the child's home. To reach the place in time she spent five cents of her lunch money for car fare. Arriving, she found other children, while but one was wanted. She was engaged, as the brightest of the group, and sent to a branch of the establishment at a distance of two and one-quarter miles. This time she walked, then worked till midnight, paying for her dinner and going without her supper. She was paid fifty cents and discharged, with the explanation that she was only required for one day. No cars were running at that hour, and the little girl walked across the worst district of Chicago to reach her home, and her terrified mother, at one o'clock on Christmas morning. No law was violated in this transaction, not even the law which limits the day's work of women and girls to 8 hours, as mercantile establishments are not yet subject to the provisions of the factory law.

Fortunately the development of the pneumatic tube has begun to supersede cash children in the more respectable of the retail stores; and the extension of the workshop law to the mercantile establishment would therefore meet with less opposition now than at any previous time.

Children nominally over 14 years old.—Besides the children confessedly under 14 years of age, there are others whose parents do not accurately know the children's ages, or who perjure themselves for the sake of obtaining the children's wages. The experience of the notaries in this office has convinced us that large numbers of foreign parents keep no record of births and deaths, and literally do not know what to swear to in making affidavit to their children's ages. Many parents have been sent away from the office with the affidavit unmade for this reason, and others have gone away and come back after a family council, ready to testify to the date there fixed upon as the date of the child's birth. But notaries are not all scrupulous, and more than one has been found willing to fill out blanks to suit the letter of the law, leaving the ignorant parent to swear to an affidavit the perjury of which he was not intelligent enough to recognize, the whole performance remaining an empty form, so far as the parent and child are concerned.

Other parents deliberately state one age to the inspector and another to the notary, and the sworn statement must, of course, be accepted in the absence of records by which it could be proved untrue.

Insufficient protection afforded by affidavits.—For these reasons there are hundreds of children in the factories today provided with affidavits of legal age, whom we have reason to regard as being under 14 years old, and therefore insufficiently protected by the law as it stands. The only step which can be taken by us to meet their case is the enforcement of the last clause of Section 4, which authorizes inspectors to require a certificate of physical fitness for any child who may seem unable to perform the labor at which he may be engaged. This clause is weak, because it permits any physician in good and regular standing to issue such certificates, and does not prescribe that the physician shall visit the workroom and see the child at work, or shall even thoroughly examine the child.

Parents have sworn that children are 14 years of age, and physicians have certified them physically capable of dangerous and exhausting work, while the children themselves say that they are but 11 or 12 years old; their small stature supports their assertion, and the records of the schools which they left bear entries of statements previously made by the parents which correspond with the present

claim of the children. Boys weighing from 56 to 61 pounds have been thus sworn to and certified fit for injurious work, while a normal, healthy school boy of 8 years weighs from 59 to 63 pounds.

For the further protection of such children other limitations should be imposed upon the employment of children under 16 years of age.

Inadequacy of Child Labor Sections.—Reference to the table of prosecutions shows that three of these eight companies have found it more profitable to undergo conviction and the payment of fines than to dispense with the employment of children or to comply with the four labor requirements of the law.

On the other hand, the employment of 90 more children each, in places such as Kirk's soap factory, Spaulding & Merrick's tobacco factory, the Crane Company's iron works, or Norton Bros.' can factory at Maywood, where no violation of the child labor clauses are found, tends to show that the law as it stands does not sufficiently protect children under 16 years of age. At Maywood the company's notary makes affidavits, and the company's physician certifies the children fit for their work, and an efficient clerk keeps affidavits, certificates, records, and register corrected from day to day. The obedience of the corporation to the child labor clauses of the law is perfect, but the law itself is so inadequate that it affords virtually no protection to life, limb, health or intelligence. In the great factory at Maywood, through all the heat of last summer, little boys worked among unguarded shafting and belting, in the fumes of the soldering, or crouched on a shelf in every crooked and unwholesome posture, poking sharp-edged circles of tin through the holes of the shelf; or were seated at stamp and die machines where every fall of the stamp is a menace to the fingers and hands. Some of these children, Italians, Bohemians and Poles, speak no English, and can not understand the warnings given them as to the dangers which surround them; some of them can not read or write in any language. . . . .

Children at the stock yards.—Another illustration of the insufficiency of the law as it stands is the presence of 302 boys and 18 girls in eight establishments at the stock yards. . . . .

Some of these children are boys who cut up the animals as soon as the hide is removed, little butchers working directly in the slaughter

house, at the most revolting part of the labor performed in the stock yards. These children stand, ankle deep, in water used for flooding the floor for the purpose of carrying off blood and refuse into the drains; they breathe air so sickening that a man not accustomed to it can stay in the place but a few moments; and their work is the most brutalizing that can be devised.

Other boys cut bones at a buzz saw, placed within fifty feet of the drying racks where skulls and horns are scorching over a flame, and the smell of the smoking bones and rags of hide excels in horror all the smells for which the stock yards are notorious. Here, in a dark, foul passage, young boys work at a machine of the most dangerous character, an unguarded buzz saw. No criminal in the United States could be punished by an hour's imprisonment in such a place without a horrified protest ringing through the land. But these young victims are kept there by their employers, day after day, and no voice is raised in their behalf. Nor is there any excuse for the existence of such surroundings. With the facilities for ventilation and deodorizing that are readily available, this passageway could be made inoffensive. Meanwhile the employment of any human being in such a place is an outrage and should be summarily stopped, but the law confers upon the inspectors no power to stop it.

(3) *Extracts from the Third Annual Report of the Factory Inspectors of Illinois, 1895, pp. 8–42*

Child labor.—The legislature of 1895 made no change in the factory law, the child labor provisions of which are, therefore, the same as in previous reports, and apply only to children engaged in manufacture; the employment of children in offices, laundries, and mercantile occupations being still wholly without legislative restriction. The good effects of the law become more manifest each year, as well as the urgent need of extending it.

The percentage of children to total employes has fallen conspicuously in the brief time during which the law has been in force. In 1893 the percentage was 8.5; in 1894 it was 6.2; in 1895 it is 4.5. During the panic of 1893, when the total number of employes fell to its lowest, and but 76,224 persons were found at work by the

inspectors there were 6,456 children under 16 years of age. In 1895 there were 8,642 children, while the total number of employes found at work rose to 190,369. In 1893 there were 85 children under 16 years of age in the thousand employes; in 1895 the number had fallen to 45 in the thousand.

The standard of size and health of the children employed has visibly improved everywhere outside of the sweatshops; and the change in this respect is conspicuous when a comparison is made with the children employed in laundries and department stores where the minimum age is not yet prescribed by law. . . . .

Children in sweatshops. . . . . The report of this department for 1894 showed that the 721 children found in the sweatshops of Chicago during that year were illiterate, while a majority of them could not speak English. In this respect there has been no improvement. That statement applies equally to the 1,307 children found at work in these shops in 1895.

No staff of ten deputies, with inspections to make throughout the State, can successfully watch sweatshops employing 1,307 children, with employers and parents conniving to evade and violate the law, and the city Board of Education declining to enforce the compulsory education law by prosecution. It cannot be claimed that this policy of inaction of the Board of Education is without bearing on the children recorded as over 14 years of age, for it is a notorious fact (although legal evidence may be hard to obtain) that the stature of the children, and the entries of the public school registers, show at least a part of these children to range in reality from 10 to 14 years.

Nothing effective can be done to redeem the sweated trades or the condition of the children employed in them, unless the strong arm of the law comes to the assistance of the unfortunate children by prohibiting them from crowding into these shops, at least until they have learned to read and write simple English.

In no case has a child of purely American parentage been found at work among the illiterate children of the sweatshops.

The objection of a certain sort of immigrant parent to sending his children to school after they are old enough to earn 25 cents a week is a purely sordid one; and no other measure seems to offer so trenchant an answer to it as the assurance that he cannot put his

child to work unless it has first received from school at least as much benefit as is embodied in a rudimentary knowledge of the English language.

Children in the glass works at Alton.—The child labor sections of the law have proved of great benefit to the children employed in glass works. Their condition when the law went into effect was more pitiable than that of any other working children in this State. It was a matter of very great difficulty to get the law obeyed in this industry, because some of the glass companies maintained that the work of young children was absolutely indispensable to the manufacture of bottles and other light wares. The inspectors insisted that the children under 14 years of age must be replaced by older ones, or by some technical improvement. The Illinois Glass Company, at Alton, maintained that this was impossible. This company was so certain of the impossibility of conducting its business in compliance with the law, that a special investigation of the condition of its works and of the children employed in them was ordered in January, 1895; all the other glass companies in the State having at that time taken steps to comply with the requirements of the law.

The following report sets forth the result of the special investigation. Since it was made, the company has accomplished that which it had declared to be impossible; making such a rearrangement of its "glory-holes" as enabled it to dispense with a large number of the smallest boys. While there are still children at work who are either dwarfish or have perjured affidavits, the number of larger boys has been increased, and 260 affidavits are kept on file. The Illinois Glass Company, the largest employer of child labor in the State, now finds it possible to comply absolutely with the child labor provisions of the law. . . . .

Hours of children.—Until the legislature acts upon the Court's suggestion and passes a law limiting the hours of minors, the children are the direst sufferers under the decision of the Supreme Court which sets aside the only legislative restriction in this State upon the hours of labor. [*In the case of Ritchie* v. *The People, 155 Ill. 98, the eight hour law had been declared unconstitutional in 1893.*]

Again, as before the factory law was enacted, the employer may extend the working day of his employes without let or hindrance,

and among these employes may be delicate little children. There is no more protection for them against the cruel exaction of overtime work than there is for the strongest man employed. If the child has reached its 14th birthday, and the employer is armed with the parent's affidavit to that effect, the child may be lawfully required to work 20 hours at a stretch.

No law of Illinois is violated when little lads work all night in rolling mills where nails are made; when little boys, just 14 years of age according to the parent's affidavit (but 10 years old or less if judged by weight and size), fetch and carry bottles all night in glass works, trotting from furnace to cooling oven and back again at the call of the blower, in the glow of the melter's fires; then going out into the cold, dark night to stumble, ill-clad and shivering, to their homes. It is the tradition of these two occupations that their trade life is, and has always been, among the shortest in the skilled trades.

In the sweatshops of Chicago, both men and girls faint from exhaustion at their machines, and during the "rush" season in the garment trades this is no rare occurrence. Yet when a girl in a sweatshop is unable to ply her machine, by foot power, from seven in the morning to four the next morning, the sweater tells her—and truthfully—that there are others who will take her place and do his work on his terms. . . . .

In Chicago children are employed long hours in two occupations which do not come under the factory law—the mercantile establishments and the laundries. In many sections of this city the stores are kept open five evenings in the week, and the children employed in these stores work 10 and 11 hours a day. Stores having special holiday trade employ thousands of children during the season, and exact of them the same number of extra hours that are exacted from the older employes. On Christmas Eve these children were dismissed from the great department stores at hours ranging from 10:45 P.M. to 12:20 A.M. During the working days of the two preceding weeks, these children had been obliged to be alertly on duty from 10 to 12 hours per day. It is believed by all who have investigated holiday employment of children that permanent injury to the children results, in many ways, from it; and that no real gain accrues, not even temporary alleviation of financial stringency in their homes.

The employment is for a very short time, and the pay received is very little. The child, demoralized by the taste of money-earning, spends days and weeks in seeking another place, not understanding that no employer wants her until the holiday season comes around again. Thus, for a few days' earnings she sacrifices a winter's school life. The physical strain of the work throughout long hours, for which there has been no gradual preparation, exhausts her vitality; and, in this exhausted condition, overheated by running in the warm air of the store, she goes out into the cold night. When this has been done night after night, throughout the holiday season, the child may have sacrificed, in addition to her winter's school life, her chance for normal development into healthy womanhood.

In laundries, the only limit to the hours of work of children seems to be the limit of their usefulness. It has been found that their little fingers become expert at "marking," and at this they are much employed, although they are also found at mangles and other dangerous machines used in steam laundries. Marking is one of the occupations which superficial observers class as "light and easy," but handling soiled clothing on its way to the washing machine is not fit work for any child. Apart from the unfitness, there is great danger of infection; much greater in the case of young children exhausted by overwork in the heat and steam of the laundry than in the case of older persons. Marking is, unfortunately, one of the branches of laundry work which begins early in the day and holds far out into the night. The following complaint was received at this office on June 3, 1895: "Goodhart's laundry has a number of little girls who don't look to be 12 years old. They worked last Saturday from 7:30 in the morning until Sunday morning at 3 o'clock. Their mothers were wild about them." As laundries do not come under the Factory Act, the inspectors could do nothing in this case—not even order the discharge of the children under 14 years of age. It was not, therefore, surprising that a second complaint was received concerning this plant, dated September 9, 1895, stating that "children under 11 years old are working there, and are made to work overtime until 9 o'clock every night." These conditions prevail in all laundries employing children.

In every trade and occupation, including those where the work is not, in itself, injurious, it is observed that the places in which

children are employed in large numbers are those where the worst general conditions for the employes prevail. . . . .

In all computation of the hours of working children in Chicago, this time spent in going to and from the place of employment must be taken into account. The journey is generally some miles long, and not infrequently the small wage of the child necessitates its walking. The hours needed for the sleep of a young child are thus seriously curtailed. The exhausted children from the stores reach their homes at any time from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M., according to the hour of leaving work and the distance of the home from the store. In an investigation of the employment of children under 14 years of age in a pickle factory in Bowmanville, ... the inspector found that these children, aged from 10 to 14 years, were obliged to leave their homes before 4 o'clock in the morning in order to be at the factory when the whistle blew for the work to begin, which was at 6:30.

To the physical and moral deterioration of children consequent upon this failure to regulate the hours of their work must be added the educational loss. Their hours of labor being unrestricted, the poor opportunity is thereby rendered illusory which is offered through the night school to the working child in more progressive States, in which the hours of employment of minors are fixed by law. It frequently happens in Illinois that a weary child has no sooner begun to attend night school than a notice is posted in the factory that failure to work throughout the evening will be followed by discharge. Where evening work is not required, the long day of ten hours, followed by the journey home on foot, so exhausts the child that it creeps into the evening school utterly incapable of mental exercise. The experience of teachers of night schools is that it is impossible to keep children awake over their books who have been shut up in store and factory through the day. . . . .

The medical certificate clause.—Section 4 of the law provides that the inspectors may demand a certificate of physical fitness from some regular physician of good standing in case of children who may appear to them physically unable to perform the labor at which they are engaged.

The enforcement of this clause was expected to effect the removal from factories and workshops of the large number of children who

are deformed or manifestly diseased. Persistent enforcement of it was also expected to enable the inspectors to obtain the discharge of all children engaged in occupations injurious, whether because of the nature of the materials used, or of the temperature, or of the processes carried on, or for any other reason. Incidentally, parents inclined to perjury were to be checkmated by the requirement of a certificate of physical fitness for all children conspicuously undersized.

Unfortunately, the statute did not empower the inspector to prescribe who shall make the certificate, nor that the making of it shall be preceded by the examination of the child or of its place of work. It was probably assumed by the legislature which enacted the statute that these essentials could be left to the faithfulness and honor of the medical profession. The experience of two and a half years compels us to the conclusion that this confidence was misplaced.

The medical certificate clause has been rendered nugatory by the reckless manner in which dispensary and "company" physicians have issued certificates gratis to all comers, irrespective of the physical condition of the child or the injurious nature of its occupation. In no case known to the inspectors has a child for whom a certificate has been required failed to obtain one, either from the sources mentioned, or from some ignorant practitioner, upon payment of a sum ranging from 25 cents to $2.

When the contractor in a sweatshop has been prohibited from employing a child until a certificate is obtained, it has been only a question where the nearest unscrupulous practitioner has his office. Sooner or later one is found who issues a certificate, correct in form, but bearing no relation to the child's size, age, physical condition, or to the nature of the occupation. . . . .

The Compulsory Education law . . . . interlocks so closely with the child labor provisions of the factory law that no report on the child labor found in this State would be complete, which did not give full weight to this intimate relation of the two laws and their enforcement.

[The text of the Compulsory Education law is omitted; for its provisions are summarized in chap. v, *ante*, pp. 69–88.]

It will be observed that the law requires but 16 weeks of school attendance, of which but 12 weeks need be consecutive. This leaves

36 weeks free in each year, during which parents and employers are subject to the temptation to put an idle child at work in violation of the factory law.

The enforcement of the meager provisions of the Compulsory Education law is left to the option of local authorities. The inequality which grows out of this option is well illustrated by the condition of the children in two manufacturing cities in opposite ends of the State. In Alton, in January, 1895, there were found . . . . 200 children under the age of 14 years, at work in a single establishment. Their employment was in direct violation of both the Compulsory Education law and the Factory act. The school board of Alton had not appointed a truant officer or made any attempt to enforce the Compulsory Education law. . . . .

The attitude of the Board of Education of Chicago is illustrated by two passages from its report for the year ending June 28, 1895. In the course of his report to the Board, Dr. Bluthardt, Superintendent of Compulsory Education, says: "The work of the Compulsory Department, shown by the yearly report, placed over 3,700 children in school; including many brought in for the first time, and truants who have dropped out from time to time. *The same spirit has been carried out as in the past, and the only forces brought to bear have been persuasion and watchfulness—no cases of prosecution having been made.*" In the list of accepted excuses occur the following:

Indifference (parent's carelessness)	160
Not vaccinated (parent's neglect)	237
Working at home	262

With such excuses accepted by the Board of Education for the non-attendance of children of compulsory school age and without prosecution, the Factory Inspectors cannot hope to keep all the children under 14 years of age out of the factories and workshops.

In the same report, Mr. Albert G. Lane, Superintendent of Schools, says: "The fifteen truant agents, appointed by the Board of Education to visit different sections of the city and to notify parents of children who do not attend school that the law requires them to do so, have done the best they could under the existing

conditions. The law is ineffective, because no penalty can be enforced. Some good is accomplished by serving notices upon parents that the children should attend school, but *wherever parents are indifferent or deliberately keep their children from school no effort has been made to enforce the law.*"

The question naturally arises: How can the Board of Education know that no penalty can be enforced, when no case has ever been tried under the law and no judicial decision obtained?

It is in part, by reason of the fact that "no effort has been made to enforce the law" by the Board of Education, that the inspectors of this department were, in 1895, under the disagreeable necessity of prosecuting 56 employers upon the charge of employing 80 children under the age of 14 years. Even where we order the discharge of the child, forward its name to the Board of Education, and prosecute the employer, we too often find the same child at work in a second or third shop, still under the required age. During the year, one boy was the cause of our prosecuting two different employers in less than two months. The parents of this boy were not prosecuted by the Board of Education, though they violated the Compulsory Education law every day that the boy worked.

It would strengthen the efforts of this department very much, if all the children were kept in school even the 16 weeks per annum which the law requires, and would remedy the injustice of holding the employer alone responsible, and letting the parent go unpunished, who certainly shares the moral responsibility and ought to be held to it under the Compulsory Education law.

So long as we are without a stringent Compulsory Education law and local boards able and willing to enforce it, we shall have children doing the work of men and women while they should be in school, and growing up unable to read and write, as we find children in the Illinois factories and workshops every day.

While the most helpless children are left unprotected by the non-enforcement of the Compulsory Education law, poverty-stricken parents and sordid employers will leave them in ignorance for the sake of the money which can be gained at the cost of the children. Nor can any effort of the factory inspectors, however faithful and painstaking, make good the wrong done the children.

We therefore again recommend that the prosecution of derelict parents be made mandatory upon local school boards, as the prosecution of manufacturers who employ children under 14 years of age is made mandatory upon the Factory Inspector, by Section 9 of the Factory law.

The failure of the school authorities to supply school accommodations for the children who are ready and willing to go to school aggravates the failure to enforce the compulsory attendance law in some places. In Alton, while 200 children under 14 years of age were at work in the glass works, there were on the list of applicants for admission to the schools 240 children in excess of the seats provided. In Chicago the report of the Board of Education for 1895 (p. 42) shows that "the number of children in rented rooms at the close of the year 1894 was 9,661, and at the close of 1895 it was 11,674. The number of children in half-day divisions at the close of 1894 was 14,086; at the close of 1895 it was 17,545." In addition to this, the latest school census of Chicago showed 6,887 children of school age who were attending no school whatever.

In a single ward of Chicago (the 19th) the seating capacity of the four public schools is 3,437, or 4,135 less than the number of children of school age (7,572), as shown by the school census of 1894. Thus less than 50 per cent of the children of school age in this ward are provided with seats in the public schools. These children cannot overflow into the schools of adjacent wards, for these also lack adequate accommodations. This 19th ward, with the three wards adjoining to the south and west (the 7th, 8th and 9th), form a vast working people's district. The residents are chiefly Italians, Bohemians, and Russian Jews, and among them are thousands of wage-earning children. These children of immigrant toilers need the best educational facilities which any American city can provide, if they are to develop into useful citizens of value to the industrial life of their generation.

The ignorance of working children.—The logical product of the educational policy of Illinois is the presence in the factories and workshops of a large body of ignorant and illiterate children.

Some of the children who come to this office to have age affidavits made, born in Chicago and brought up under the shadow of the public

schools, cannot write their names, and many who can do this can write nothing else. In general, it is true that children taken as witnesses from the stockyards, the sweatshops and the tenement house cigar shops, cannot write or read a simple sentence in the English language. In the course of the prosecutions carried on during the present year, children have been called as witnesses who, born in Chicago or brought here in infancy, yet cannot answer in English such simple questions, as "What is your name?" "Where do you live?" "Do you know how old you are?" "What is the name of the firm you are working for?" Hence the evidence of the children is frequently taken through a Polish, Russian or Bohemian interpreter. . . . .

All the illiterate children ought to be turned out of the factories and workshops and into schools for purposes of instruction. But, besides this immediate purpose, there is another important point to be gained by requiring a certain grade of intelligence of all children before permitting them to go to work, viz.: the re-inforcement of the age limit.

In order to enforce the prohibition of the employment of children under the age of 14 years, the statute requires that before any child goes to work, there must first be obtained and placed on file an affidavit made by the parent or guardian stating the name, date and place of birth of every child employed under the age of 16 years. This provision is intended to throw upon the parent, where it properly belongs, the responsibility for the statement, under oath, of the exact age of the child. In the case of intelligent and conscientious parents this provision works well, and enforced by prosecution of all manufacturers found employing children without affidavits, has done much to raise the standard of age and stature of the children employed in factories and workshops compared with those in mercantile occupations where the minimum age of work is not yet prescribed by law. But the provision breaks down in the case of the very children who need it most, the children of illiterate and degraded parents.

Many of the parents who come to this office to make affidavit to the age of their children do not definitely know the age; or, if they know it, they can, for lack of available birth records, falsify it without fear of detection. Many parents are ready to swear to any state-

ment, to trust the notary to fill the blank in any way which will enable the child to go to work at once. . . . . Whenever there is reasonable doubt as to the age of children, the parents are sent away with the affidavit unmade; but the first notary to whom they go after leaving the office usually fills the blank, and we have no authority to dispute its correctness, when we subsequently find it in a shop. Parents have sworn that children were 14 years of age, though the children themselves said they were but 11 or 12 years old; their small stature supported their assertion and the records of the schools they left bear entries of statements previously made by the parents which correspond with the claim of the children. Some parents deliberately state one age to the inspectors and another to the notary who makes the affidavit, and the sworn statement must be accepted in the absence of birth records by which it could be proved untrue. . . . .

(4) *Extracts from the Fourth Annual Report of the Factory Inspectors of Illinois, 1896, pp. 10–30*

Child labor.—The child labor provisions of the law have not been amended or altered since it was enacted in 1893, and apply only to manufacturing establishments, factories and workshops. Their object is to prohibit the employment of children under 14 years of age in manufacture. There is no provision for limiting the employment of illiterate children, or safeguarding life and limb of those who have reached 14 years. The clause which provides for health certificates is nugatory. There is no restriction upon the hours of labor. When children 14 years old are equipped with age affidavits and health certificates, there is no power in any officer of the State to regulate the nature of the work selected for them, or the conditions under which the work is performed. They may be required to work all night, or seven days in the week, and in the most dangerous occupations. . . . .

Education.—The educational status of the children found at work shows no improvement. From garment and cigar shops children are still taken into court as witnesses in factory cases who speak no English, some of them having lived several years in the

State, in dense foreign colonies; and going to school, if at all, where English is not taught.

The compulsory school law remains a dead letter, no prosecution ever having been undertaken, so far as is known to this department, for its enforcement by any board of education. The weakness of its provisions continues to serve as excuse for continued failure to prosecute parents for violating it.

It is therefore still the unpleasant duty of the inspectors to prosecute employers for hiring children under 14 years of age, in violation of the factory law. It is manifestly unfair to let parents go unpunished who share with employers the responsibility for this illegal work, and who should be held responsible under the compulsory attendance law, as manufacturers are held under the factory law. This duty properly devolves upon both the inspectors and the local school authorities, and neither can perform it effectively alone.

Until there are schools for the children, and a compulsory education law that is enforced, the factory inspectors cannot keep all the children under 14 years out of factories and workshops. While an effective factory law is the best possible supplement to a good compulsory education law, neither can take the place of the other; and the attempt to enable the factory inspectors to do the work of truant officers can never be successful. . . . .

In manufacturing centers there is the same lack of school accommodations to which attention has been called in previous reports, as one great reason for the illiteracy prevailing among working children in this State.

In Chicago, the City Council has taken a distinctly retrograde step in reducing the school appropriations by $2,000,000 for 1896–97, thus checking the building of school houses, and depriving thousands of working class children of the opportunity for school life which primary schools are supposed to extend to all alike. That the working children are thus vitally affected, the report of the Chicago Board of Education for 1896 shows.

Mr. D. R. Cameron, president of the Board, says: "The number of sittings owned by the Board has increased during the past year 14,519, an equivalent of 16, 20-room school buildings. The total enrolment of pupils in our schools during the year 1894–5 was

201,380, and for the year 1895–6 reached the aggregate of 215,784 pupils, an increase of 14,404; whereby, it will be noted, the number of new sittings for this last year exceeded the additional enrolment of pupils by 115, not a great gain, yet a gain. This is a most satisfactory showing, for, so far as my knowledge extends, it is the first time in years that the work of this important committee (Buildings and Grounds) has outrun the increase of school membership. This gratifying record might have become a reasonable hope for the future had not the Common Council so seriously crippled the work of the Board by a reduction of $2,000,000 from its resources for the year 1896–7.

"The serious crippling of this department must re-act in adverse ways and meet its compensation in increased expenditure for police, judicial and penal institutions. The whole policy of a government is summed up in the requirement, educate or punish. To cheapen one is to multiply the cost of the other by a large ratio. The schools are our social and political safeguards, especially so when, in our cosmopolitan population, we are confronted not so much with the question of educating a homogeneous people, but with the far more difficult problem of providing educational facilities for children of every nationality under the sun."

The committee on Buildings and Grounds reports: "We have reduced the number of children in half-day divisions from 20,000 in September, 1895 to 15,708 in June, 1896. . . . . But it must be borne in mind that we have, besides those children in half-day divisions about 11,700 others in rented rooms, just as many as we had at the beginning of the school year. Were it not for the curtailment of our funds by the City Council, next year we should have made rapid strides towards the completion of enough schools to accommodate every child seeking an education.

"No additional buildings can be started, and in accepting the situation we have simply to rest in the consciousness that no matter what our needs are, we cannot spend what we have not got."

How brief is the school life of the majority of the children, Mr. A. G. Lane, Superintendent of Schools, shows in his report, as follows: "Sixty-seven and three-tenths per cent. of the average daily membership was in the primary grades; twenty-eight and a half per cent. was in the grammar grades, and four and 23/100 per cent. was in the

high school grades. I repeat the statement and table printed last year, showing that nearly seventy per cent. of the children who enter school each year remain in school until they become members of the fifth grade, which is the first grammar grade, and embraces the fifth year's work."

Children usually enter school at six years of age and finish a grade a year. Mr. Lane's figures, therefore, indicate that rather more than thirty per cent. of the children leave school under the age of eleven years, forty per cent. at about that age, while rather less than thirty per cent. remain longer in school. Conceding that a portion fail to pass a grade a year, and remain in the primary grades six or seven years, the inference would still be unavoidable that two-thirds of the children leave the public schools far below the legal age of work. While this state of things continues, the factory inspectors cannot obtain complete compliance with the law prohibiting employment of children under 14 years of age.

It is sometimes urged in mitigation of the early employment of children that the ambitious ones who really care for self-improvement, can continue their studies in the night schools. On this point Mr. Lane says: "There were 3,263 persons under 15 years of age in attendance (at the night schools). Many of the younger ones, pupils in the elementary grades, are irregular and lack interest, which is caused largely by physical exhaustion."

Children who have worked all day with the intensity demanded by the conditions of work in our time are in no state to profit by the best possible teaching in the evening.

The introduction of manual training into the public schools (it has been introduced into 66 schools in Chicago alone during 1896) aggravates the disadvantage of the boy who drops out of the fifth grade, or a lower one, to spend his days in some wretched brainless manipulation, which teaches him no trade, and leaves him less valuable, because less eager and wide-awake, than the boy who has never worked for wages.

In the three and a half years since the creation of this department a large number of affidavits have been filled out in the office for children just 14 years old, who were going to work for the first time. The eager ambition of these children (mixed, perhaps, with a certain

pleasure in escaping from school) is to earn money and "make a living." But precocity is dangerous in this, as in everything else, and later acquaintance with many of these children shows a serious deterioration in moral fibre.

A lad going to work thus early, hoping to help his widowed mother, soon finds his work precarious, and his wages, even when he is steadily employed, insufficient to maintain the family, who remain dependent on charity. If the boy, starting with this noble impulse, escape all the accidents to which the rashness of childhood subjects him even beyond the exposure common to all employes; and if he retain his health, in spite of the injurious surroundings of his work, he is still likely to deteriorate into a weary drudge, lacking all the grit and energy which every man needs who is to hold his own in the industrial life of this generation.

No acquisition of a skilled trade compensates the child of today for loss of the education afforded by the primary schools. There might have been some such compensation in the early days when boys learned trades which assured them a livelihood. Far from having any educational value, the work which young children now perform, teaches them chiefly instability and disregard of the future. Having learned how little they can earn by their utmost exertion, and balancing this exertion against the pay, they too often settle down into mere "corner loafers," valueless to the community, to the family, and to themselves. This undermining effect upon character, of premature entry upon the work of life, though less conspicuous than some other dangers of child labor, is no less serious.

The New York compulsory school law extends to the age of 16 years, and the New York factory law authorizes inspectors to order the discharge of children under 16 years of age who cannot read and write simple English. Under this provision the inspectors ordered the discharge of 238 illiterate children in one year, and report a marked decrease in illiteracy since the provision went into effect. Parents have learned that an immediate commercial value attaches to some slight mastery of the English tongue by their children. This prohibition of employment of children who cannot read and write in English would be especially beneficial in Illinois, where a large body of the foreign-born population is not yet assimilated.

We recommend that the prosecution of parents derelict under the compulsory education law be made mandatory upon local school boards, as the prosecution of manufacturers who employ children under 14 years of age is mandatory upon the Factory Inspector.

For children over 14 years of age, we recommend the enactment of the requirement that they must be able to read and write simple English before going to work. . . . .

Some children are sent to work because the father drinks, and does not support the family. Others leave school because the tradition is wide-spread and powerful that a child who has reached the age of confirmation is ready to enter upon the work of life. This tradition is deeply rooted among foreign colonies, where recent immigrants are eager to turn the earning capacity of the children to account at the earliest moment. "I have fed her 14 years, and now she can help me pay off my mortgages," was the reply of a stalwart, prosperous looking immigrant when asked why he wanted an affidavit for his crooked-backed, puny child, on her 14th birthday.

A secondary cause of employment of children is the belief that their labor is cheap. This cheapness is largely illusory. In the glass industry, when the youngest boys were removed by enforcement of the law, a slight technical improvement immediately took their place; and with its help their work is now done by older boys, without added cost to manufacturers. In the book-binding trade, the folding machine is replacing the smaller girls in all the best equipped binderies. Even when no new machinery follows removal of the younger children, a boy or girl just over 16 costs very little more in wages than one under 15.

If no child under 16 years of age were employed after tomorrow, it is doubtful whether the actual increase in cost to employers generally would be perceptible.

Premature work costs the children the years of education and normal growth which prepare for healthy and useful manhood and womanhood. It engenders incompetent employes, incapable of entire self-support. It disables a large proportion of workers, by undermining their health in childhood. It often ends in mutilation by exposing ignorant and reckless boys and girls to dangerous machinery and explosives. To the children and to the community, then, this work is not cheap; it is intolerably expensive.

APPENDIX IV

EARLY LAWS OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FREE SCHOOLS, COMPULSORY EDUCATION, AND CHILD LABOR

Extracts from: (1) An Act Providing for the Establishment of Free Schools, 1825; (2) An Act to Provide for the Application of the Interest of the Fund Arising from the Sale of the School Lands Belonging to the Several Townships in This State, 1833; (3) An Act Relating to Schools in Township Thirty-nine North, Range Fourteen East, 1835; (4) An Act to Establish and Maintain a System of Free Schools, 1855; (5) An Act to Secure to All Children the Benefits of an Elementary Education, 1883.

(1) *Extracts from "An Act Providing for the Establishment of Free Schools" (in force January 15, 1825)*

To enjoy our rights and liberties, we must understand them; their security and protection ought to be the first object of a free people; and it is a well established fact that no nation has ever continued long in the enjoyment of civil and political freedom, which was not both virtuous and enlightened; and believing that the advancement of literature always has been, and ever will be the means of developing more fully the rights of man, that the mind of every citizen in a republic is the common property of society, and constitutes the basis of its strength and happiness; it is therefore considered the peculiar duty of a free government, like ours, to encourage and extend the improvement and cultivation of the intellectual energies of the whole: Therefore,

1. *Be it enacted by the people of the state of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly*, That there shall be established a common school or schools in each of the counties of this state, which shall be open and free to every class of white citizens, between the ages of five and twenty-one years: *Provided*, That persons over the age of

twenty-one years, may be admitted into such schools, on such terms as the trustees of the school district may prescribe.

2. *Be it further enacted,* That the county commissioners' courts, shall, from time to time, form school districts in their respective counties, whenever a petition may be presented for that purpose by a majority of the qualified voters, resident within such contemplated district. . . . .

4. *Be it further enacted,* That it shall be the duty of the trustees to superintend the schools within their respective districts; . . . . to make an annual report to the county commissioners' court of the proper county, of the number of children living within the bounds of such district, between the ages of five and twenty-one years, and what number of them are actually sent to school, with a certificate of the time a school is actually kept up in the district, with the probable expense of the same. . . . .

22. *Be it further enacted,* That it shall be the duty of the inhabitants of any district, at their regular or called meetings, to make such regulations for building or repairing school houses as they may think necessary, and for furnishing the school house with fire-wood and furniture; they shall have power to class themselves, and agree upon the number of days each person or class shall work in making such improvements, and all other regulations that they may think necessary to accomplish such building or improvement: *Provided, however,* That no person shall be required to do any work, or pay for such improvements or wood, unless they have the care of a child between the age of five and twenty-one years, or unless he shall attend the school for the purpose of obtaining instruction; and for any neglect or refusal to do such work, by any one of the inhabitants, according to this act, there shall be a fine for each day they shall so neglect or refuse to work of seventy-five cents.

24. *Be it further enacted,* That whenever the tax is levied, according to the twelfth section of this act, in good merchantable produce, it shall be lawful for the trustees to make out a list, with a warrant, stating amounts to be collected in produce; and they shall have power to transfer the list and warrant to any teacher or teachers that they may have employed, who shall have full power to collect the same; and if any person shall refuse or neglect to pay their respective

amounts, in produce, for two weeks after demanded, it shall be lawful to collect the same in cash: *Provided*, That whenever there is any disagreement about the price of any produce offered in payment, it shall be the duty of each to select one disinterested house-keeper, to value the same, and if they cannot agree it shall be their duty to choose a third, and all such valuation shall be binding.

Approved, January 15, 1825.

(2) *Extracts from "An Act to Provide for the Application of the Interest of the Fund Arising from the Sale of the School Lands Belonging to the Several Townships in This State" (in force May 1, 1833)*

3. On the first Saturday in May next, or if the school shall commence after that time, then at some time within one month after the commencement of the school, a meeting of the employers of the teachers shall be held, of which meeting the teachers shall give three days previous notice, to each of his employers, who are not absent from the neighborhood, at which meeting such employers shall proceed to appoint three persons as trustees of said schools; said trustees shall be authorized, and it shall be their duty to visit the school from time to time, and to require the admission into the school, and the gratuitous tuition of such children residing in the vicinity of the school as shall be presented to said trustees for that purpose, if such trustees shall believe that the parents or guardians of such children are unable to pay for their tuition. It shall also be the duty of said trustees to receive and apply to the use of the school, any donations of money, books, maps, globes, stationery, or other articles necessary or useful for schools. . . . .

4. The teacher shall make a schedule of the names of all scholars attending his school, who reside within the township to which the school fund belongs, from the interest of which he wishes to obtain a part of his compensation; and on every day on which a school shall be kept by him, he shall set down under the proper date, and opposite the name of each scholar, the attendance or absence of such scholar. Immediately after the close of the month of October, or sooner, if his school shall have come to a close, said teacher shall add together the

number of days which each scholar residing in the proper township shall have attended his school, and set down the total number of days opposite the name of such scholar; he shall then add together their several amounts, and set down the total number at the bottom of the schedule; and this total number, after the schedule shall have been examined, and if necessary corrected by the school commissioner, shall be the criterion by which he shall be governed in making the apportionment aforesaid; but no such schedule shall be taken into consideration unless it shall be accompanied by a certificate from a majority of the trustees of the school, or from five of the employers of said teacher, setting forth that they verily believe said schedule to be correct, and that said teacher has, to the best of their knowledge and belief, given gratuitous instruction in said school, to all such orphans and children of indigent parents residing in the vicinity, as have been presented for that purpose by the trustees of said school. If any school shall contain scholars residing in two or more different townships, each possessing a productive school fund derived from their school lands, the teacher of the school in order to become entitled to a share of the interest of each of said township school funds, shall make separate schedules of the names of his scholars residing in each of said townships, and make return thereof to the school commissioner of the county in which such township, or the larger part thereof, shall be situated. In making the apportionment authorized by the foregoing part of this act, no services of any teacher shall be taken into consideration, except such as shall have been rendered between the last day of April and the first day of November of the present year.

5. On the second Monday of November, in the year one thousand eight-hundred and thirty-four, or within one week thereafter, and at the same time in each succeeding year, each school commissioner shall proceed to apportion the interest derived from each township school fund in his county, among the several teachers entitled to the same. In all cases where such interest is not required to pay the expenses incident to the survey and sale of the school lands, and the management of the fund, such apportionment of interest shall be made among the several teachers entitled to it, according to the number of their scholars residing in the township possessed of such school fund, and the number of days each of said scholars shall have been

instructed by such teacher, within the twelve months immediately preceding the month in which such apportionment is hereby required to be made, to be ascertained in the mode pointed out in the fourth section of this act. . . . .

(3) *Extracts from "An Act Relating to Schools in Township Thirty-nine North, Range Fourteen East" (in the City of Chicago) (in force February 6, 1835)*

1. *Be it enacted by the people of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly,* That the legal voters in township thirty-nine north, range fourteen east, in Cook County, shall assemble at the usual place of holding elections in the said township, on the first Monday in June next, and annually thereafter, and elect either five or seven persons to be school inspectors, who shall continue in office one year and until others are elected. . . . .

3. The said school inspectors, or some of them, shall visit all of the public schools within the township, at least once a month; inquire into the progress of the scholars and the government of the schools; examine all persons offering themselves as candidates for teaching, and when found well qualified, give them certificates thereof gratuitously, and attend at the quarterly examinations of the scholars. They may advise and direct as to the books to be used, and the course of study to be pursued in the schools; may remove teachers for any just cause; make by-laws for the regulations of the schools: *Provided,* That a majority of the voters, at any legal meeting of the township called for the purpose, may repeal such by-laws; may divide the schools into male and female departments, if they think it expedient; and if a majority of the legal voters of the township shall require it, they may establish one or more high schools, under such regulations as a majority of such legal voters may prescribe; and they may do such other things in relation to schools, not inconsistent with this act, as a majority of the legal voters of the township may direct.

4. The legal voters in each school district, shall annually elect three persons to be trustees of common schools, whose duty it shall be to employ qualified and suitable teachers; to see that the schools are *free,* and that all the white children in the district have an oppor-

tunity of attending them, under such regulations as the inspectors may make; to take charge of the school houses, and all of the school property belonging to the district, and to manage the whole financial concerns thereof. The said trustees shall annually levy and collect a tax sufficient to defray the necessary expense of fuel, rent of school room, and furniture for the same; and they shall levy and collect such additional taxes as a majority of the legal voters of the district, at a meeting called for that purpose, shall direct: *Provided*, That such additional taxes shall never exceed one-half of one per cent. per annum upon all the taxable property in the district; all of which taxes the said trustees shall have full power to assess and collect.

. . . .

6. The trustees of each district shall, at the end of every quarter, make report to the school inspectors in writing, which report shall set forth the number of schools within the district; the time that each has been taught during the previous quarter, and whether by male or female teachers; the number of scholars, and the time of their attendance during the quarter, to be ascertained by the teachers' keeping an exact list or roll of the scholars' names; the number present every school-time or half day, which roll or list shall be sworn to or affirmed by the teacher, and shall accompany the trustees' report.

. . . .

8. The school inspectors shall quarterly apportion the said school moneys among the several districts in the said township according to the number of scholars in school therein, between the ages of five and twenty-one years; and also, according to the time that each scholar has actually attended such school during the previous quarter, to be ascertained by the report of the said trustees and teachers.

9. Whenever the said apportionment shall have been made, the school inspectors shall make out a schedule thereof, setting forth the amount due to each district, the person or persons entitled to receive the same, and shall deliver the said schedule, together with the reports of the trustees, and the lists or the rolls of the teachers, to the commissioner of school lands, and thereupon the said commissioner shall pay over such parts of the interest of the school moneys belonging to the said township, as the said inspectors, in said schedule, may direct. It shall be the duty of the commissioner of school lands, in Cook County, to preserve all of the schedules, reports and teachers'

rolls, that may be delivered to him as aforesaid, and to make a record thereof in a book to be kept by him for that purpose, and he shall annually make and transmit to the Auditor of the State, a report, which shall set forth the various items contained in the trustees' reports and teachers' rolls, and such other information concerning the schools in the said township, as he may have in his possession, together with a particular account of all of the school moneys by him paid out, and such other matters as he may see fit to add.

10. It shall be the duty of the inspectors, semi-annually, to make a report, setting forth the state and condition of the schools in the said township, and cause the same to be published in one or more of the newspapers printed in the township: *Provided*, nothing in this act shall be so construed as to authorize the school commissioner of Cook County to pay to said trustees any part of the principal belonging to said township.

This act to be in force from and after its passage.

Approved, February 6, 1835.

(4) *Extracts from "An Act to Establish and Maintain a System of Free Schools (in force February 15, 1855)*

45. A majority of said directors shall constitute a quorum to do business. . . . . They shall establish a sufficient number of common schools for the education of every individual person over the age of five and under twenty-one years, in their respective districts; and shall make the necessary provision for continuing such schools in operation for at least six months in each year, and longer if practicable. . . . .

67. The common school fund of this state shall consist of such sum as will be produced by the annual levy and assessment of two mills upon each dollar's valuation of all the taxable property in the state, and there is hereby levied and assessed annually, in addition to the revenue for state purposes, the said two mills upon each dollar's valuation of all the taxable property in the state, to be collected and paid into the state treasury as other revenue is collected and paid; and the amount due from the state, according to a statement and settlement of the account between the state and that fund, under the provisions of an act entitled an "Act to provide for the distribution and application of the interest on the school, college and

seminary fund," approved on the seventh of February 1835, and of all funds which have been or may be received by the state from the United States, for the use and support of common schools, and also of the money added to the common school fund which was received from the United States under an act of congress providing for a distribution of the surplus revenue of the United States. . . . .

70. At each meeting in October, or at any subsequent meeting thereafter, before the first of May, annually, each township board of trustees in this state shall determine, by estimate, as nearly as practicable, the entire amount of money necessary to be expended in the township to keep in good condition and operation a sufficient number of free schools for the accommodation of all the children in said township during the ensuing year, over and above the available means arising from the township fund, or from other sources, and applicable to general school purposes, and also such additional amount as the board may think necessary for the exclusive purpose of supplying any deficiency in the fund for the payment of teachers, and for the purpose of extending the terms of schools after the state or common school fund shall have been exhausted; and shall determine, as nearly as practicable, what rate per cent. on the one hundred dollars' valuation of all the taxable property in the township, each of said amounts separately, will require to be levied.

(5) *Extracts from "An Act to Secure to All Children the Benefit of an Elementary Education" (in force July 1, 1883)*

[The first compulsory education law in Illinois.]

1. *Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:* That every person having the control and charge of any child or children, between the ages of eight and fourteen years, shall send such child or children to a public or private school for a period of not less than twelve weeks in each school year, unless such child or children are excused from attending school by the board of education, or school directors of the city, town, or school district in which such child or children reside. Such excuse may be given by said board of education or school directors for any good cause shown why said child or children shall not be required to attend school in conformity with this act.

2. It shall be a good defense to any suit brought under this act, if the person under whose control such child or children are, can show that the mental or bodily condition of such child or children is such as to prevent its attendance at school or application to study for the period required by this act, or, that such child or children have been taught in a private school, or at home for the time specified in this act, in such branches as are ordinarily taught in primary or other schools, or have acquired the branches of learning ordinarily taught in public schools, or that no public school has been taught within two miles, by the nearest traveled road, of the residence of such child or children, within the school district in which said child or children reside, for twelve weeks during the year.

3. If any person having the control and charge of any child or children shall fail or neglect to comply with the provisions of this act, said person shall pay a fine of not less than five nor more than twenty dollars. Suit for the recovery of the fine and costs shall be brought by any director, or member of any board of education, of the district in which such person resided at the time of the committal of the offense, before any justice of the peace of said township. Jurisdiction is hereby conferred on all justices of the peace in this State for enforcing this act. Such fine shall be paid, when collected, to the school treasurer of said township, to be accounted for by him as other school money raised for school purposes.

4. It is hereby made the duty of school directors and members of the boards of education to prosecute offenses occurring under this act. The neglect so to prosecute by any school director, or member of any board of education, within twenty days after written notice has been served on such director, or member of such board of education, by any tax payer residing in such district, that any person has violated this act, shall subject him or them to a fine of ten dollars, to be sued for by any tax payer residing in the school district where the violation of this act occurred, before any justice of the peace in the township where the said school district may be located; and when such fine is collected it shall be reported by said treasurer, and accounted for as other money raised for school purposes, and become a part of the school fund of said township.

Approved, June 23, 1883.

APPENDIX V

TABLE SHOWING IN PARALLEL COLUMNS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOR LAWS OF ILLINOIS, 1870–1916

Compulsory Education	Child Labor
	1872 An Act providing for the health and safety of persons employed in coal mines.
	Age and occupation.—Employment of child under 14 in mines forbidden.
	Enforcement.—County surveyor *ex-officio* mine inspector.
	1877 An Act to amend act of 1872.
	Age and occupation.—Employment of child under 12 in mine forbidden.
	Enforcement.—County board to appoint competent inspectors.
	1877 An Act to prevent and punish wrongs to children.
	Age and occupation.—Employment of child under 14 in occupation dangerous to morality, health, or life forbidden. Child so engaged may be taken into custody of court.
	Enforcement.—No provision.

Compulsory Education	Child Labor
	1879 An Act providing for the health and safety of persons employed in coal mines. *Age and occupation.*—Employment of child under 12 or illiterate boy under 14 forbidden. Certain occupations forbidden under 18. *Enforcement.*—County board to appoint inspectors.
1883 An Act to secure to children the benefit of an elementary education. *Age limits.*—8 to 14. *Period of attendance.*—12 weeks annually. *Exemptions.*—Mental or physical inability; completion of required course; instruction at home or in private school; distance of two miles from public school. *Enforcement.*—School directors and boards of education to prosecute offenders. Penalty, a fine of $5 to $20.	1883 An Act to amend act of 1879. *Age and occupation.*—Employment of child under 14 in mine forbidden. *Enforcement.*—Governor to appoint competent inspectors.
	1887 An Act to amend act of 1879 and amendatory act of 1883. *Age and occupation.*—Employment of child under 14 in mine forbidden. Parent to make age affidavit. *Enforcement.*—State inspectors.
1889 An Act concerning the education of children.	

	Compulsory Education	Child Labor
	Age limits.—7 to 14. *Period of attendance.*—16 weeks annually, at least 10 to be consecutive, at school giving prescribed instruction in English. *Exemption.*—Mental or physical inability; completion of course of study; instruction at home or in approved private school. *Enforcement.*—Board of Education to appoint truant officers to apprehend children and to prosecute parents. Penalty prescribed for not securing attendance of child and for misstatement concerning age of child.	
1891		An Act to prevent child labor. *Age and occupation.*—Employment of child under 13 in any store, shop, factory, or manufacturing establisment, forbidden; employed child must have school certificate. *Exemption.*—If earnings are required to support aged or infirm relative. *Enforcement.*—No provision.
1893	An Act concerning the education of children. *Age limits.*—7 to 14. *Period of attendance.*—16 weeks annually, at least 12 to be consecutive, at public or private day school.	1893—An Act to regulate the manufacture of clothing, wearing apparel, and other articles in this state, and to provide for the appointment of state inspectors to enforce the same, and to

Compulsory Education	Child Labor
Exemption.—Physical or mental inability; instruction elsewhere; excused for sufficient reason by competent court of record. *Enforcement.*—Board of Education may appoint truant officers as in 1889. One member of board to be appointed to hear reasons for non-attendance.	make an appropriation therefor. *Age and occupation.*—Employment of child under 14 in manufacturing establishment, factory, or workshop forbidden. Parent to make age affidavit for employed child between 14 and 16. Certificate of physical fitness may be required. *Duty of employer.*—Must keep register of all employees under 16. *Enforcement.*—State factory inspectors.
1897 An Act to promote attendance of children in schools and to prevent truancy. *Age limits.*—7 to 14. *Period of attendance.*—16 weeks annually, 12 to be consecutive, at public or private day school. Term for children under 10 to commence with school year; for children over 10 not later than December 1. *Exemptions.*—Mental or physical inability; instruction elsewhere; excused for sufficient reason by competent court of record. *Enforcement.*—Board of Education to appoint truant officers as in 1889.	1897 An Act to regulate the employment of children in the state of Illinois and to provide for the enforcement thereof. *Age and occupation.*—No child under 14 to work for wages. Extra hazardous employment forbidden for children under 16. Age affidavits required. Presence of child under 16 in work place prima facie evidence of employment. *Hours of labor.*—No child under 16 to work more than 10 hours a day, 60 hours a week. *Duty of employer.*—Must keep register of all employees under 16.

Compulsory Education	Child Labor
	Enforcement.—State factory inspectors.
1899 An Act to enable boards of education or boards of school trustees to establish and maintain parental or truant schools.	1899 An Act to revise the laws in relation to coal mines and subjects relating thereto and providing for the health and safety of persons employed therein.
Establishment.—Mandatory within two years in cities of 100,000 or over; in cities of 25,000 to 100,000 at any time by majority vote. No school to be at or near any penal institution.	(Child labor provisions same as in act of 1887.)
Commitment.—Child guilty of truancy or habitual violation of school rules may be committed by court, to be kept till 14, unless previously convicted of offense punishable by confinement in penal institution.	
Parole.—To be granted if record is satisfactory. Child who violates parole to be returned to Parental School, and not to be paroled again for specified term. Principal of school attended by paroled child must report each month to Parental School.	
Miscellaneous.—Incorrigible child may be transferred to reformatory. Parents to supply clothing. Rules of management in general same as for public schools.	

COMPULSORY EDUCATION

1903 An Act to amend the act of 1897.

Age limits.—7 to 14.

Period of attendance.—Public or private day school, for entire session; not less than 110 days of actual teaching.

Exemptions.—Same as in act of 1897.

Enforcement.—Same as in act of 1897.

1907 An Act to amend act of 1897 as amended in 1903.

CHILD LABOR

1903 An Act to regulate the employment of children in the State of Illinois, and to provide for the enforcement thereof.

Age and occupation.—Employment of all children under 14, and of children between 14 and 16 at specified dangerous trades forbidden. Girls 14 to 16 not to do work requiring constant standing; children 14 to 16 must have age and school certificates; if illiterate must attend evening school. Presence of child under 16 in work place prima facie evidence of employment.

Hours of labor.—Children under 16 not to work more than 8 hours a day, 48 hours a week. Night work forbidden.

Duty of employer.—Must keep register of all employees under 16.

Enforcement.—State factory inspectors.

1905 An Act to amend act of 1899.

Age and occupation.—Child under 16 not to work in any mine. Parent to make age affidavit.

Enforcement.—State mine inspectors.

	Compulsory Education	Child Labor
	Age limits.—7 to 16. *Period of attendance.* Same as in act of 1903. *Exemptions.*—Mental or physical inability; instruction elsewhere; excused temporarily for cause by teachers; between 14 and 16 excused if necessarily and lawfully employed. *Enforcement.*—Same as in act of 1903.	
1909	An Act to establish and maintain a system of free schools (Secs. 274, 275). *Age limits.*—7 to 16. *Period of attendance.*—Public or private school for entire session; not less than six months of actual teaching. *Exemptions.*—Same as in act of 1907. *Enforcement.*—Same as in act of 1907.	
1911		An Act to revise the laws in relation to coal mines and subjects relating thereto, and providing for the health and safety of persons employed therein. (Child labor provisions same as in act of 1905.)

APPENDIX VI

A NOTE[1] ON STATISTICS RELATING TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN CHICAGO

Consideration of the problem of truancy necessarily involves a study of statistics of school attendance and enrolment. Exact information on these points, however, is difficult to obtain. To answer with any degree of precision the questions that arise as to enrolment in the Chicago schools, irregularity of attendance, distribution of children between public and private schools, and like problems, it is necessary to study the *Proceedings* and *Annual Reports* of the Board of Education, the *Biennial School Census*, and the *Official Catholic Directory*. The first two deal with the public schools only, and give figures which are practically the same, those in the *Reports* being derived from those in the *Proceedings*. The *School Census* figures, which differ considerably from those in the *Reports* of the Board of Education, are for both public and private schools; but for the most important group of private institutions, the Catholic parochial schools, the *Official Catholic Directory* is our only source of information.

Even with so many sets of facts at hand, it is impossible to ascertain exactly the number of school children in Chicago. Turning first to the public schools, we find that the *Proceedings* of the Board of Education give us, during the seventeen years studied, tables of total enrolment, average daily membership, average daily attendance, and total membership. There are also tables of membership in the separate departments of the school system, and, after 1900, in the schools for defectives, the Parental School, and the John Worthy School. All these tables are given for each month of the school year. Our interest centers, however, in the tables of monthly

[1] For this note we are indebted to Natalie Walker, research student, 1914–15, and to Fanny R. Sweeny (now Mrs. Wickes), research student, 1911–12.

enrolment and membership for the whole system, their meaning and the relations between them.

Each year, as Table I shows, the enrolment—that is, the number of children who have been registered at any time during the year—increases noticeably from September to June. This gain is so great

TABLE I

TOTAL ENROLMENT IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND JUNE, WITH EXCESS OF JUNE OVER SEPTEMBER, FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS 1897–98 TO 1913–14*

YEAR	ENROLMENT		EXCESS OF JUNE OVER SEPTEMBER
	September	June	
1897–98	208,574	236,239	27,665
1898–99	215,682	242,807	27,125
1899–1900	222,739	255,861	33,122
1900–1901	229,890	262,738	32,848
1901– 2	234,593	268,392	33,799
1902– 3	239,331	274,247	34,916
1903– 4	246,597	279,183	32,586
1904– 5	251,067	282,346	31,279
1905– 6	254,379	287,113	32,734
1906– 7	255,798	286,766	30,968
1907– 8	255,212	292,580	37,368
1908– 9	260,331	296,427	36,096
1909–10	261,683	301,172	39,489
1910–11	265,552	304,146	38,594
1911–12	268,595	307,281	38,686
1912–13	274,533	315,737	41,204
1913–14	286,492	332,248	45,756

*Data from monthly tables in the *Proceedings* of the Chicago Board of Education.

that it raises a question as to whether it can represent so great an actual increase in the number of children attending school, especially since the number drops again the following September. Some of the difference is, of course, due merely to later entrance. Other possible causes of increase are the entrance of children reaching seven years of age, and the entrance of those coming from private schools and from other cities. This, however, could hardly account for so great a gain, especially as there are counterbalancing losses constantly

going on, when children leave school at the upper age limit, change to private schools, or move to other cities. It seems probable, therefore, that much of this gain is due to duplicate enrolment, that is, the registration in the books of both schools of children who have been transferred from one public school to another. As to this, however, we can only guess since there is no separate enumeration of transfers and readmissions.

The supposition that duplicate enrolment may be an explanation for the great increase in the figures from September to June is supported by a study of the tables of monthly membership, that is, the number of children who are in fairly regular attendance at school. Table II shows that not only is the smallest enrolment (September)

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF LARGEST MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH SMALLEST MONTHLY ENROLMENT (SEPTEMBER), AND DECREASE IN MEMBERSHIP FROM SEPTEMBER TO JUNE, FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS 1897–98 TO 1913–14*

Year	Months in Which Membership Was Largest	Surplus of September Enrolment over Largest Monthly Membership	Decrease in Membership from September to June
1897–98	October	4,937	9,898
1898–99	November	4,471	14,727
1899–1900	October	5,622	8,467
1900–1901	October	4,638	11,897
1901– 2	October	5,132	11,178
1902– 3	October	6,170	12,277
1903– 4	October	5,988	6,952
1904– 5	November	6,047	9,729
1905– 6	September	7,085	11,396
1906– 7	September	7,061†	14,256
1907– 8	October	6,660	6,242
1908– 9	November	8,288	8,568
1909–10	September	8,605	8,684
1910–11	September	8,109	11,525
1911–12	September	8,398	7,776
1912–13	October	8,221	7,988
1913–14	September	8,283	4,490

* Based on monthly tables of enrolment and membership in *Proceedings* of the Chicago Board of Education.

† Membership for April larger, but obviously a misprint.

invariably considerably larger than the largest monthly membership, but that, though the enrolment increases steadily from September to June, the membership decreases. This falling off in membership can scarcely be attributed to transfers, as in that case the gains would offset the losses. It may, however, be due to an excess of losses over gains from private schools and other cities; to the excess of those leaving school when they become fourteen over those entering when they become seven; to illness or incapacity; to truancy, working under age, or other illegal absence. How the losses apportion themselves among these possible causes cannot be determined.

If, then, we are asked, "How many children are there in the public schools?" we have a considerable range of numbers from which to select a reply. It may be that the largest membership will come nearest to showing the number of children actually in school. If, however, we prefer the enrolment figures, we are at a loss to know which to select. It would seem that September or October would probably contain the smallest number of duplications; but, on the other hand, the Board of Education gives the June enrolment as the number of children for the year, and it is possible, and in some cases certain, that other cities also report the largest enrolment as the number for the year. The *School Census* gives us still another set of totals. In 1904 the number of children attending the public schools as given in the School Census corresponds most nearly to that given in the *Proceedings* as the September enrolment. In 1906 the census number lies between the membership for September and that for October, and is considerably less than the September enrolment. In 1908, however, it is nearest to the October enrolment, and in 1910 it lies between the enrolments for February and for March. For 1912 the census figure is considerably larger than the June enrolment, but in 1914, though the census was taken in May, the total number of children recorded as attending the public schools corresponds exactly to the June enrolment. This coincidence is even more startling when we recall the fact that the census supposedly includes in its total not only the children in public schools, but also the large number who are enrolled in private schools.

The *School Census* figures are obviously useless for checking those given in the *Proceedings* and *Reports* of the Board of Education. Not

only do the totals vary greatly, but the figures are given in the *Proceedings* by school divisions and by age at the time of first enrolment, and in the census by age at the time of enumeration. Comparison between the two sets of figures is impossible. Furthermore, as the age grouping changes considerably, the census figures from year to year are not readily comparable with each other.

Returning to a consideration of the numbers of children in the schools, we find that, if the *School Census* returns are unsatisfactory for comparison with those given by the Board of Education, they are equally so for comparison with those for the Catholic parochial schools. No census taken after 1900 makes any distinction between these schools and other private schools, and censuses taken before 1900 give figures of doubtful accuracy. In order to study the numbers in this most important group of private schools it was therefore necessary to turn to the *Official Catholic Directory*, and Table III

TABLE III

STATISTICS OF ENROLMENT OF CATHOLIC PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS OF CHICAGO FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS 1897–98 TO 1913–14* †

YEAR	GIVEN TOTAL	COMPUTED TOTAL	
		All Schools	Minus High Schools Named
1897–98	.....	44,893	.....
1899–1900	.....	50,301	.....
1901– 2	.....	57,419	.....
1903– 4	.....	65,438	.....
1904– 5	68,004	68,432	64,463
1905– 6	68,004	72,351	69,611
1906– 7	68,004	‡	.....
1907– 8	68,520	76,532	73,707
1908– 9	78,200	79,861	77,491
1909–10	81,680	84,694	82,084
1910–11	82,975	86,055	83,188
1911–12	90,500	88,709	87,249
1912–13	94,315	90,834	89,941
1913–14	95,110	94,520	93,284

*Excluding 1898–99, 1900–1901, 1902–3.

†Based on figures in *Official Catholic Directory* for years cited.

‡Figures for separate schools not found.

presents statistics of enrolment for the Catholic parochial schools of Chicago for a series of years. Before 1905 the enrolment is given biennially for each school, and from these data, totals for the city were computed. For 1905, however, and for every year thereafter, a total for the city is given. For several years, however, these totals are almost certainly inaccurate, as the figures for 1905, 1906, and 1907 are exactly the same, and 1908, as Table III shows, makes only a very slight change. This inaccuracy, together with some uncertainty as to what is included in the given total, as well as the fact that the totals prior to 1905 were of necessity computed, made it seem best, in dealing with the parochial schools, to use the computed grand total, including, so far as we know, all schools, grades, and ages.

There is general agreement among the parochial school teachers that the reports sent to the *Directory* are based on enrolment at the end of the school year, and comparison may therefore fairly be made between the June enrolment for the public schools, and the computed totals for the parochial schools. This comparison has been made in Table IV, which shows a steady gain in numbers for the parochial as well as for the public schools. Though the transfers between public and private schools may fairly be assumed to cancel each other in the course of a year, it is most probable that the Catholic school figures, like those for the public schools, contain many duplications. For this reason the sum of the two enrolments would probably be somewhat greater than the actual number registered in the schools.

The steady gain in the Catholic school enrolment is even more apparent in Table V, which shows, in so far as it can be ascertained, the distribution of school children between the two systems.[1] It will be observed that from 1897 to 1904, we have figures for alternate years only. Comparable parochial school figures for the other years

[1] In making this computation we have assumed that the number of pupils enrolled in all schools equals the total for the public schools (June enrolment) plus the computed totals for the Catholic parochial schools. To this was added 4 per cent of the combined total to represent the other private schools. We find that when the census gives figures for these schools, as in 1898 and 1900, the number practically equals this 4 per cent of the combined total. In the absence of information to the contrary, we have assumed this proportion to be constant.

are lacking. After 1904 the figures are, with one exception, given for every year. It is obvious that, while both the Catholic and the public schools show a marked gain in actual numbers, the proportion of children in the Catholic schools is increasing rapidly at the expense of the public schools, which show a relatively decreasing enrolment.

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF NUMBERS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC AND CATHOLIC PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS OF CHICAGO FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS 1897–98 TO 1913–14

Year	June Enrolment Public Schools	Computed Total Catholic Parochial Schools
1897–98	236,239	44,893
1898–99	242,807	*
1899–1900	255,861	50,001
1900– 1	262,783	*
1901– 2	268,392	57,149
1902– 3	274,247	*
1903– 4	279,183	65,438
1904– 5	282,346	68,423
1905– 6	287,113	72,351
1906– 7	286,766	†
1907– 8	292,581	76,532
1908– 9	296,427	79,861
1909–10	301,172	84,694
1910–11	304,146	86,055
1911–12	307,281	88,709
1912–13	315,737	90,834
1913–14	332,248	94,520

*Comparable figures not given.
†Figures for separate schools not found.

From this cursory attempt to answer some of the most frequently recurring questions as to school attendance, it is evident that the information available is most unsatisfactory. The difficulty seems, in general, to be due rather to a careless presentation of material than to lack of facts. The exception to this is, of course, the matter of duplicate enrolment. Account should be kept not only of transfers between public schools, and from public to private schools, but

also of readmissions to the public schools. If these facts were properly recorded, it would be possible to tell, from year to year, exactly how many children were enrolled in the city schools. This number would agree, approximately, with the total membership of the schools, and we should not be called upon annually, as we are now, to explain the problem of a steadily increasing enrolment and a steadily decreasing membership.

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN IN CHICAGO SCHOOLS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND CATHOLIC PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

YEAR*	NUMBER PER 1,000 SCHOOL CHILDREN	
	Public Schools	Catholic Parochial Schools
1897–98	809	153
1899–1900	803	157
1901– 2	792	169
1903– 4	778	182
1904– 5	773	187
1905– 6	768	183
1907– 8	762	199
1908– 9	755	204
1909–10	750	211
1910–11	749	212
1911–12	746	215
1912–13	747	215
1913–14	749	213

*As the enrolment for the separate Catholic schools was not given in 1906–7, it was impossible to compute the total enrolment, and was therefore necessary to omit from the table the figures for this year.

The school census may be expected ultimately to furnish valuable attendance statistics but the statistical work should be more carefully done than it has been in the past. All children of compulsory school age should be systematically and logically accounted for. It ought to be possible to ascertain from the school census the total number and the regularity of attendance of children enrolled in public, parochial, and other private schools.

APPENDIX VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHICAGO BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SUPERVISION

Attention has been called to the helplessness of many children who take their working papers at fourteen. Most helpless of all, perhaps as a group, are the boys released from the Parental School because they have reached this age and under the law can no longer be held.[1] Very few of these boys return to school. They were sent to the Parental School because they were in need of special training and care which their own homes and the day school could not give, and when they leave the Parental School they are in peculiar need of help. They are without jobs and they have no one at home able to find jobs for them. They are, in fact, in greater need of help than the majority of other children given working papers who have been in their own homes all the time and who are therefore more likely to be put in touch with opportunities for work.

Because of the character of the homes from which these boys came and because of the helplessness of the boys themselves when they left the school, advantage was taken of the opportunity offered by this investigation to advise with them with reference to their choice of work, and to assist them to find work when they were unwilling or unable to return to the regular day school. The attempt was made to understand the problem of employment as they faced it, both because it would add to the results of the investigation and because a genuine service might be rendered to the children. A small employment bureau for these boys was therefore organized in connection with the Department of Social Investigation at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy in order to get directly from and with them the experience of finding and keeping "a job" in Chicago. This seemed relevant to an inquiry into the adequacy of the com-

[1] It is not possible to obtain the number of these boys from the *Reports* of the Board of Education. There seem to have been 797 between 1902 and 1913 (see *Fifty-ninth Annual Report of the Chicago Board of Education*, p. 298).

pulsory education law, the effectiveness of the court as a device for strengthening the school, and the reasonableness of accepting "lawful employment" as a substitute for schooling during these two important years of the child's life.

To try to assist boys or girls in finding work is a task not to be lightly undertaken. It means not only a thoroughgoing investigation into opportunities of employment open to children under sixteen, but a careful study of the particular child. On the one hand, it means interviews with employers and foremen, and on the other, interviews with the child before he leaves school, with his teachers, and with parents in the home—interviews which give as complete information as can be gained of what the boy wants to do and thinks he can do, of what his teachers believe him to be fitted for physically and mentally, and most important of all, the judgment of his parents, their hopes and fears if they will share them, and such light as his home circumstances and relationships throw on the possibilities of his working career. This is, of course, only half the battle. There is also the selection, from among all of the available jobs that can be found, of the one to which the boy seems best adapted, and then frequently the difficult task of persuading the boy to give up being a messenger boy or some other wasteful occupation on which he may have set his heart, convincing the parents perhaps to take a lower wage at the start in a job which is going to mean learning as well as earning, and, finally, constant communication with the boy after he is placed; for watching the child after a job has been found is as important as finding the job. The temptation to leave one employer and "try another" is in the air. Boys give up their jobs on the most trivial pretexts and often without telling the employer they intend to leave. In such cases it is often possible to persuade the employer to give the boy another trial, to show the boy how much he may gain by working steadily for the same firm, and to explain to the parents the dangers of casual habits. The task is not a simple task. It involves often many interviews, much firm but gentle dealing with boy and parents, and close co-operation with employer; but it also means a knowledge of the chaos surrounding fourteen-year-old boys entering the wage-earning market unguarded and unguided—a knowledge which is worth all it costs.

The same problem presents itself to the fourteen-year-old girls who are leaving school to go to work, and the same method is of even greater value in the case of girls than of boys; because, few as are the opportunities of an industrially promising kind for boys, they are fewer for girls, since most employments for women today are in fact "blind-alley" or "dead end" employments. Moreover, the problem of school attendance for girls is one to which much less attention has been given. The number of girls whose attendance is so irregular or whose conduct so bad as to call for action on the part of the Compulsory Education Department is almost negligible; and few of these are brought into the Juvenile Court. There is no Parental School for girls. We therefore had no opportunity to undertake in connection with our Juvenile Court inquiry the same investigational experiment for girls which we undertook for the Parental School boys. But by the co-operation of three women's organizations, the Chicago Woman's Club, the Chicago Association of Collegiate Alumnae, and the Woman's City Club, we were enabled to obtain at first for a period of four months and later, permanently, a special investigator who was peculiarly fitted for the work of investigating employment opportunities for girls.

Toward the end of the school year, as the knowledge of trade conditions accumulated and the connection with good employers became gradually established, we were able to take care of a very considerable number of children sent to us by the settlements who knew of our experimental work, and by the United Charities and some other organizations. In particular, especially handicapped children were sent to us, a one-armed girl, a lame boy, a deaf and dumb girl, and undersized or delicate children who were in work that was too hard for them or unsuitable for other reasons.

In the month of June we undertook to interview and to place all of the children in the Washburne School, one of the largest schools on the West Side, who were planning to go to work at the end of the school year. Office hours were kept in a neighboring settlement, the Henry Booth House, which generously offered space, and the school principal was glad to co-operate by sending the children to us and by giving his personal advice. In addition to interviews with the children, visits to all the homes were made, and

when the parents seemed able to keep the child in school longer, they were strongly urged to do so.

At this early period in our experiment, the work received a certain official sanction from the educational authorities. The data gathered by the investigator[1] were placed at the disposal of the principal of the Lucy Flower Technical High School, which was opened in September 1911, so that various questions connected with the curriculum of that school could be determined with reference to trade opportunities for girls. At the request of Mrs. Young, superintendent of schools, office hours were held in the school building in order to advise the girls taking technical training with reference to their selection of a trade and their placement at the end of their course.

After the close of the first year, the work was continued under the Joint Committee, supported by the various woman's clubs of Chicago. The Chicago Women's Aid Society undertook the support of a worker who would handle the cases of Jewish children, and the Joint Committee entered upon a policy of raising so-called scholarships for children who were wholly unfit to be placed and whose family needs were too great to allow of their remaining longer in school without aid.

On January 12, 1912, through the interest and co-operation of Miss Addams, the Hull-House Trade School was opened. On May 15 the Joint Committee undertook to pay the salary of another visitor, and in October of that year the Association of Commerce undertook the support of a worker. From that time until February, 1916, the staff consisted of four persons, the director and three other "visitors" working under her supervision. In March, 1913, the Board of Education recognized the work more definitely by allotting office space in the Jones School, near the headquarters of the Certificate Issuing Bureau, by providing clerical assistance and telephone service, and by placing the work under the general supervision of one of the district superintendents. On May 1, 1913,

[1] To this investigator, Miss Anne S. Davis, research student 1907–8 and 1908–9, we are greatly indebted for assistance of many kinds. Miss Davis is now at the head of the Bureau of Vocational Supervision in the Chicago Public Schools.

he issued the following circular (Series III, No. 18) regarding the Bureau and its work:

DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL SUPERVISION

A. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BUREAU

The work of the Bureau of Vocational Supervision which has been established in a number of the Chicago Schools is an enlargement of the work which has been carried on for the last two years at the Lucy Flower Technical High School through a general office maintained by a number of private organizations. A central office has been established in the rooms of the Board of Education, and office hours are held in a number of schools in which it seems the workers might be of service in advising children.

The Bureau for two years has been making a special study of the industrial opportunities open to boys and girls who are leaving school to go to work. As a result of this study it is obvious that there is little prospect for the child who leaves school at fourteen, and that there is a great need for continued education and training. With this fund of information concerning conditions of employment the Bureau is prepared to interview children and parents and advise them with regard to the most suitable occupations and further educational courses.

B. AIM OF THE BUREAU

1. To encourage boys and girls to remain and to continue their education after leaving the Elementary School.

2. To refrain from suggesting to the child the possibilities of going to work before it is absolutely necessary.

3. In case a child cannot be persuaded to continue in school, to see that the children enter as far as possible the trades or occupations for which they seem best fitted.

4. To suggest to those children who enter unskilled employment to attend Evening Schools and classes to qualify themselves to undertake other work of a more skilled nature.

5. To keep in touch with children who have been interviewed and advise them after they have been placed, whether again in school or at work.

C. CO-OPERATION OF THE PRINCIPALS

The Bureau is anxious to render effective and efficient service to the Principals and to supplement and extend their work in advising the children who contemplate leaving school to go to work.

To the knowledge which the Principals and teachers possess of the child's educational qualifications, his inclinations, and perhaps his physical condition, the Bureau wishes to add its information as to opportunities open to children of this age, and its corps of trained workers who visit the homes, consult with the parents, and make suggestions as to the child's possibilities and future.

A number of children, to whom age and school certificates had already been issued, have been returned to school after such consultations. The Bureau feels that a great deal more could be done if these children and parents were interviewed before certificates are granted. It is hoped that so far as possible the Principals will send children to the workers before giving them their certificates.

W. M. Roberts, *District Superintendent*

Approved:
Ella Flagg Young
Superintendent of Schools

In March, 1914, there was published for the use of the schools a report prepared by the director of the Bureau on *Occupations and Industries open to Children between Fourteen and Sixteen Years of Age in Chicago*, and during that year Mrs. Young recommended that the Board of Education assume the entire support of the Bureau and, in anticipation of such action, asked the workers in the Bureau to qualify for public service by taking an examination which entitled them to certificates as high-school teachers. The recommendation of the Superintendent was rejected at that time, and the work of the Bureau retained its peculiar semi-public semi-private character until March 1, 1916, when in accordance with action taken January, 1916, the names of the three workers still connected with the Bureau who had taken the examination were transferred to the public pay-roll.

As the work has been from the beginning under the same director, it has developed uninterruptedly and without radical change of method. The work has been done principally in about twenty schools, where the principals have given cordial and sympathetic co-operation. One object always held in view is that of persuading all children whose family situation makes it possible for them to do so to remain in school. Consequently a considerable number of these children who come to the Bureau before going to work, even if they have been given their working papers, are persuaded to return to

school or to remain in school. It seems practically impossible to persuade children who come to the Bureau after having gone to work to return to school. In some schools a representative of the Bureau confers with each child expecting to graduate with reference to his plans. Advantage is then taken of the opportunity to make known to the child the advantages of going on to high school. In every case in which there is a possibility of the child's continuing his school life, the parents are visited and informed of the vocational and technical training now available for their children.

In several schools, arrangements have been made for the vocational supervisor to conduct the graduating class to the different technical high schools, so that the children may have a better idea of the kinds of training offered. In a number of schools talks are given not only to the graduating class, but to the sixth and seventh grades, emphasizing the need for further education and urging the children to remain in school until they are at least sixteen years of age. And principals of several of these schools have thought that the influence of the Bureau could be felt in the decreasing number of children who leave school and the increasing number who are going on to high school.

During each summer, letters are written to parents whose children plan not to return, and interviews are had with them explaining the seasonal and wasteful character of boy and girl labor and the advantage of keeping the children in school until they are at least sixteen years of age. In the same way, before the time at which promotions are made, when children are likely to drop out, the principals of all the schools are reminded of the great loss resulting from failure to complete the course and are stimulated to urge the children to continue in school.

The numbers of children served by this small group of workers has been very considerable. During the year 1914–15, the last for which complete figures are at hand, 3,568 children, of whom 1,809 were boys and 1,759 were girls, were helped by the Bureau. Of these, 3,519 children had never worked, and 640 were persuaded to remain in school or to return to school. How important this part of the Bureau's work is may be indicated to some extent by the fact that 1,349 children had gone no farther than the sixth grade in school.

From the nature of the problem presented by these children, it is evident that the Bureau offers the opportunity for very careful and thorough personal service, on which not only the industrial future of the children but the well-being of the family may depend. The results of such service may be illustrated by the case of Stanley ———, who came to the Bureau shortly after it began to care for other than Parental School boys. Stanley was sixteen years old when he first came to the Bureau and was the next to the oldest in a family of six children. His brother of nineteen had left school at the earliest possible moment, had drifted from one job to another, and had become a casual laborer. His father, too, worked spasmodically, had never learned a trade, nor been taught to do anything well. The boy was working in a box factory carrying boards, and earned six dollars a week. He was sent to the Bureau by the United Charities, who had been assisting the family from time to time, to see if he could be placed where he would learn something, so that he would not follow in the footsteps of his father and brother. He had graduated from the eighth grade, was found to be eager and ambitious, and wanted to learn the printing trade. A place was found for him with a good printing firm at an initial wage of five dollars a week. He has been in this same shop over three years now, and is earning fourteen dollars a week. A year later he sent to the Bureau his brother Joseph, who had just left school at the age of fourteen, having finished the seventh grade. Joseph came to the Bureau for work, but he was encouraged to return to complete the eighth grade. A year later he applied for work. He, too, thought that he would like to learn the printing trade. He was told that he could not be placed in a printing shop until he was sixteen, but a temporary position was found for him in an office. When he reached his sixteenth birthday, he was transferred to a printing shop where he began work at a wage of five dollars a week, and has had his wages raised several times. Both boys have attended one of the technical evening schools.

These boys, because they were given a little advice and assistance, are not only learning a trade and are happy in the work they are doing, but they are able to support their family, which is no longer a burden to the community.

In the matter of persuading children to return to school sometimes only a little effort is necessary. Often "the lady in the downtown office" to whom the principals send the children can do what the principals themselves cannot do. But sometimes a great deal of effort is necessary; for example, a boy who applied for his working permit, was leaving school because several of his friends were working, and had offered to get him a job. At first he would not listen to any argument in favor of his staying in school. Finally it was discovered that he was interested in electrical work. He was told then that if he graduated he could go to a technical school and take an electrical course. So he decided to go back and finish the eighth grade. In the autumn, however, the boy appeared at the Bureau with his father. He had visions of not making his grade, and had decided that he might as well quit and go to work. He was again persuaded to go to school. In December, the mother was doubtful if she could send the boy to high school after graduation, since her husband had worked irregularly through the winter. But in February, when the boy was graduated, no further opposition was put in his way and he went on to a technical high school.

Sometimes it is necessary to change the child from one school to another in order that he may receive the best training for a particular need. For instance, an unenlightened teacher advised a boy to leave school "because he had too much energy" and the boy came to the Bureau. Though he had completed only the seventh grade at fourteen, he was very bright, and it seemed too bad to turn him loose into some "blind alley" occupation. So he was advised to enter the prevocational class at a technical high school. There he found in working with his hands an outlet for his surplus energy, and had progressed so well in his academic studies that he went on with some high-school courses.

Another child, a girl, who had not been able to keep up with her school work on account of sickness, had become discouraged and was about to leave school. Since she could go to school only two years longer, she needed to make the best of that time in getting practical training and was consequently sent to the Lucy Flower Technical School.

Sometimes persuasion is all that is necessary to keep a child in school or to send him on to high school, but in other cases it is necessary

to provide books or clothes or a small scholarship. In interviewing children who were graduating at the mid-year, it was found that a number of them could go to high school if books were provided. Children cannot depend upon getting books from school funds. One girl who entered high school was forced to drop out at the end of the first week and went to work in a factory because she could not secure "fund" books. In a single day six boys came to the Bureau who had entered high school but had to leave because they could not afford to buy books. In order to meet this need for school books the Bureau has established a loan-book fund which in one term enabled thirty children who otherwise would have been compelled to drop out to continue their high-school work. A free textbook law would of course obviate these difficulties.

During the year 1914–15, sixty-eight children were kept in school by being given "scholarships," ranging in amount from 50 cents a week, or carfare, in some cases, to $3.00 a week in others. These "scholarships," which were provided by private subscription, have been given to the handicapped or physically weak children who are not able to work, yet would be compelled to do so if a scholarship were not provided; to the immigrant children who would have a better chance if they could go to school a while longer to acquire a better knowledge of English; to exceptionally bright children who are anxious to stay in school and who might make rapid progress if given an opportunity.

For example, late in the summer a district superintendent sent to the Bureau a mother and her daughter who had inquired concerning a free business course. The girl was just fourteen. She had graduated from grammar school in June with a high average. The mother, a widow, who supported herself and her daughter, wanted to send the girl to high school, but found that she could not afford it, as she was working irregularly. She had heard of a business college which offered free instruction for six months, and she thought she might make a sacrifice for that short time. The girl was unusually ambitious, her teachers spoke well of her ability, and it seemed unfair that she should not have an opportunity. A scholarship of ten dollars a month was secured for the next two years, and the girl was enabled to enter the high school for the two-year commercial course.

Another girl of fourteen was sent to the Bureau for employment. Her mother did occasional washings, and one sister earned $7.50 a week. There were two other children in school. The child was undersized and pale looking. After a physical examination it was found that she had tubercular glands. She was given a scholarship of $10.00 a month and sent to the Franklin Open Air School, where she has made good progress.

An immigrant girl of fourteen, whose father was dead, had reached the third grade in school, though she had been in this country only six months. She was bright and eager and was anxious to remain in school so that she might learn more English. A scholarship of $10.00 a month was provided so that she could finish the year in school. At the end of the term she was transferred to the Hull-House Trade School to learn dressmaking.

In November, 1914, a girl of fourteen applied to the Bureau for work. She was valedictorian of her class which had graduated in June, and she had hoped that she might go to high school. But her father had met with an accident and could not work regularly, and there were five younger children to be supported. A scholarship of $8.00 a month was provided, which enabled her to go to high school. Though she was two months late in entering she made up her work, and her average for the first semester was over 95 per cent.

The Bureau tries so far as possible to place the children to whom scholarships are given in schools and classes where they will receive practical training that will prepare them for some special line of work. Those in the high schools generally take the commercial or vocational courses. One has, however, been enrolled to take the general course in the hope of becoming a health officer, and another is determined to go to college. Experience with these children confirms the testimony which can be got from many sources that accepting "lawful employment" as a substitute for school attendance means great loss to the children and to the community, to the children who are allowed to enter without preparation a labor market which has no real need for them, to the community which needs the labor of men and women of well-developed bodies and trained minds.

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